THE BIBLIOTAPH AND OTHER PEOPLE

BY LEON H. VINCENT

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THE BIBLIOTAPH

And Other People

BY

LEON H. VINCENT

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TO MY FATHER

THE REV. B. T. VINCENT, D.D.

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS

Dedicated

WITH LOVE AND ADMIRATION

FOUR of these papers — the first Bibliotaph, and the notes on Keats, Gautier, and Stevenson's *St. Ives* — are reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly* by the kind permission of the editor.

I am also indebted to the literary editor of the *Springfield Republican* and to the editors of *Poet-Lore*, respectively, for allowing me to reprint the paper on *Thomas Hardy* and the lecture on *An Elizabethan Novelist.*

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THE BIBLIOTAPH AND OTHER PEOPLE

THE BIBLIOTAPH: A PORTRAIT NOT WHOLLY IMAGINARY

A POPULAR and fairly orthodox opinion concerning book-collectors is that their vices are many, their virtues of a negative sort, and their ways altogether past finding out. Yet the most hostile critic is bound to admit that the fraternity of bibliophiles is eminently picturesque. If their doings are inscrutable, they are also romantic; if their vices are numerous, the heinousness of those vices is mitigated by the fact that it is possible to sin humorously. Regard him how you will, the sayings and doings of the collector give life and color to the pages of those books which treat of books. He is amusing when he is purely an imaginary creature. For example, there was one Thomas Blinton. Every one who has ever read the volume called *Books and Bookmen* knows about Thomas Blinton. He was a man who wickedly adorned his volumes with morocco bindings, while his wife

'sighed in vain for some old *point d'Alençon lace*.' He was a man who was capable of bidding fifteen pounds for a Foppens edition of the essays of Montaigne, though fifteen pounds happened to be 'exactly the amount which he owed his plumber and gas-fitter, a worthy man with a large family.' From this fictitious Thomas Blinton all the way back to Richard Heber, who was very real, and who piled up books as other men heap together vulgar riches, book-collectors have been a picturesque folk.

The name of Heber suggests the thought that all men who buy books are not bibliophiles. He alone is worthy the title who acquires his volumes with something like passion. One may buy books like a gentleman, and that is very well. One may buy books like a gentleman and a scholar, which counts for something more. But to be truly of the elect one must resemble Richard Heber, and buy books like a gentleman, a scholar, and a madman.

You may find an account of Heber in an old file of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. He began in his youth by making a library of the classics. Then he became interested in rare English books, and collected them *con amore* for thirty years. He was very rich, and he had never given hostages to fortune; it was therefore possible for him to indulge his fine passion without stint. He bought only the best books, and he bought them by thousands and by tens of thou-

sands. He would have held as foolishness that saying from the Greek which exhorts one to do nothing too much. According to Heber's theory, it is impossible to have too many good books. Usually one library is supposed to be enough for one man. Heber was satisfied only with eight libraries, and then he was hardly satisfied. He had a library in his house at Hodnet. 'His residence in Pimlico, where he died, was filled, like Magliabecchi's at Florence, with books from the top to the bottom; every chair, every table, every passage containing piles of erudition.' He had a house in York Street which was crowded with books. He had a library in Oxford, one at Paris, one at Antwerp, one at Brussels, and one at Ghent. The most accurate estimate of his collections places the number at 146,827 volumes. Heber is believed to have spent half a million dollars for books. After his death the collections were dispersed. The catalogue was published in twelve parts, and the sales lasted over three years.

Heber had a witty way of explaining why he possessed so many copies of the same book. When taxed with the sin of buying duplicates he replied in this manner: 'Why, you see, sir, no man can comfortably do without *three* copies of a book. One he must have for his show copy, and he will probably keep it at his country house; another he will require for his own use and reference; and unless he is inclined to

part with this, which is very inconvenient, or risk the injury of his best copy, he must needs have a third at the service of his friends.'

In the pursuit of a coveted volume Heber was indefatigable. He was not of those Sybaritic buyers who sit in their offices while agents and dealers do the work. 'On hearing of a curious book he has been known to put himself into the mail-coach, and travel three, four, or five hundred miles to obtain it, fearful to trust his commission to a letter.' He knew the solid comfort to be had in reading a book catalogue. Dealers were in the habit of sending him the advance sheets of their lists. He ordered books from his death-bed, and for anything we know to the contrary died with a catalogue in his fingers.

A life devoted to such a passion is a stumbling-block to the practical man, and to the Philistine foolishness. Yet you may hear men praised because up to the day of death they were diligent in business, — business which added to life nothing more significant than that useful thing called money. Thoreau used to say that if a man spent half his time in the woods for the love of the woods he was in danger of being looked upon as a loafer; but if he spent all his time as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making Earth bald before her time, he was regarded as an upright and industrious citizen.

Heber had a genius for friendship as well as for gathering together choice books. Sir Walter Scott addressed verses to him. Professor Porson wrote emendations for him in his favorite copy of *Athenæus*. To him was inscribed Dr. Ferrier's poetical epistle on Bibliomania. His virtues were celebrated by Dibdin and by Burton. In brief, the sketch of Heber in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1834, contains a list of forty-six names, — all men of distinction by birth, learning, or genius, and all men who were proud to call Richard Heber friend. He was a mighty hunter of books. He was genial, scholarly, generous. Out-of-door men will be pleased to know that he was active physically. He was a tremendous walker, and enjoyed tiring out his bailiff by an all-day tramp.

Of many good things said of him this is one of the best: 'The learned and curious, whether rich or poor, have always free access to his library.' Thus was it possible for Scott very truthfully to say to Heber, 'Thy volumes open as thy heart.'

No life of this Prince of Book-Hunters has been written, I believe. Some one with access to the material, and a sympathy with the love of books as books, should write a memoir of Heber the Magnificent. It ought not to be a large volume, but it might well be about the size of Henry Stevens's *Recollections of James*

Lenox. And if it were equally readable it were a readable book indeed.

Dibdin thought that Heber's tastes were so catholic as to make it difficult to classify him among hunters of books. The implication is that most men can be classified. They have their specialties. What pleases one collector much pleases another but little or not at all. Collectors differ radically in the attitude they take with respect to their volumes. One man buys books to read, another buys them to gloat over, a third that he may fortify them behind glass doors and keep the key in his pocket. Therefore have learned words been devised to make apparent the varieties of motive and taste. These words begin with *biblio;* you may have a *biblio* almost anything.

Two interesting types of maniac are known respectively as the bibliotaph and the biblioclast. A biblioclast is one who indulges himself in the questionable pleasure of mutilating books in order more sumptuously to fit out a particular volume. The disease is English in origin, though some of the worst cases have been observed in America. Clergymen and presidents of colleges have been known to be seized with it. The victim becomes more or less irresponsible, and presently runs mad. Such an one was John Bagford, of diabolical memory, who mutilated not less than ten thousand volumes to form his vast collection of title-

pages. John Bagford died an unrepentant sinner, lamenting with one of his later breaths that he could not live long enough to get hold of a genuine Caxton and rip the initial page out of that.

The bibliotaph buries books; not literally, but sometimes with as much effect as if he had put his books underground. There are several varieties of him. The dog-in-the-manger bibliotaph is the worst; he uses his books but little himself, and allows others to use them not at all. On the other hand, a man may be a bibliotaph simply from inability to get at his books. He may be homeless, a bachelor, a denizen of boarding-houses, a wanderer upon the face of the earth. He may keep his books in storage or accumulate them in the country, against the day when he shall have a town house with proper library.

The most genial lover of books who has walked city streets for many a day was a bibliotaph. He accumulated books for years in the huge garret of a farmhouse standing upon the outskirts of a Westchester County village. A good relative 'mothered' the books for him in his absence. When the collection outgrew the garret it was moved into a big village store. It was the wonder of the place. The country folk flattened their noses against the panes and tried to peer into the gloom beyond the half-drawn shades. The neighboring stores were

in comparison miracles of business activity. On one side was a harness-shop; on the other a nondescript establishment at which one might buy anything, from sunbonnets and corsets to canned salmon and fresh eggs. Between these centres of village life stood the silent tomb for books. The stranger within the gates had this curiosity pointed out to him along with the new High School and the Soldiers' Monument.

By shading one's eyes to keep away the glare of the light, it was possible to make out tall carved oaken cases with glass doors, which lined the walls. They gave distinction to the place. It was not difficult to understand the point of view of the dressmaker from across the way who stepped over to satisfy her curiosity concerning the stranger, and his concerning the books, and who said in a friendly manner as she peered through a rent in the adjoining shade, 'It 's almost like a cathedral, ain't it?'

To an inquiry about the owner of the books she replied that he was brought up in that county; that there were people around there who said that he had been an exhorter years ago; her impression was that now he was a 'political revivalist,' if I knew what that was.

The phrase seemed hopeless, but light was thrown upon it when, later, I learned that this man of many buried books gave addresses upon the responsibilities of citizenship, upon the higher politics, and upon themes of like char-

acter. They said that he was humorous. The farmers liked to hear him speak. But it was rumored that he went to colleges, too. The dressmaker thought that the buying of so many books was 'wicked.' 'He goes from New York to Beersheba, and from Chicago to Dan, buying books. Never reads 'em because he hardly ever comes here.'

It became possible to identify the Bibliotaph of the country store with a certain mature youth who some time since 'gave his friends the slip, chose land-travel or seafaring,' and has not returned to build the town house with proper library. They who observed him closely thought that he resembled Heber in certain ways. Perhaps this fact alone would justify an attempt at a verbal portrait. But the additional circumstance that, in days when people with the slightest excuse therefor have themselves regularly photographed, this old-fashioned youth refused to allow his 'likeness' to be taken, — this circumstance must do what it can to extenuate minuteness of detail in the picture, as well as over-attention to points of which a photograph would have taken no account.

You are to conceive of a man between thirty-eight and forty years of age, big-bodied, rapidly acquiring that rotund shape which is thought becoming to bishops, about six feet high though stooping a little, prodigiously active, walking with incredible rapidity, having large limbs,

large feet, large though well-shaped and very white hands; in short, a huge fellow physically, as big of heart as of body, and, in the affectionate thought of those who knew him best, as big of intellect as of heart.

His head might be described as leonine. It was a massive head, covered with a tremendous mane of brown hair. This was never worn long, but it was so thick and of such fine texture that it constituted a real beauty. He had no conceit of it, being innocent of that peculiar German type of vanity which runs to hair, yet he could not prevent people from commenting on his extraordinary hirsute adornment. Their occasional remarks excited his mirth. If they spoke of it again, he would protest. Once, among a small party of his closest friends, the conversation turned upon the subject of hair, and then upon the beauty of *his* hair; whereupon he cried out, 'I am embarrassed by this unnecessary display of interest in my Samsonian assertiveness.'

He loved to tease certain of his acquaintances who, though younger than himself, were rapidly losing their natural head-covering. He prodded them with ingeniously worded reflections upon their unhappy condition. He would take as a motto Erasmus's unkind salutation, 'Bene sit tibi cum tuo calvitio,' and multiply amusing variations upon it. He delighted in sending them prescriptions and advertisements clipped

from newspapers and medical journals. He quoted at them the remark of a pale, bald, blond young literary aspirant, who, seeing him, the Bibliotaph, passing by, exclaimed audibly and almost passionately, 'Oh, I perfectly adore *hair!*'

Of his clothes it might be said that he did not wear them, but rather dwelt at large in them. They were made by high-priced tailors and were fashionably cut, but he lived in them so violently — that is, traveled so much, walked so much, sat so long and so hard, gestured so earnestly, and carried in his many pockets such an extraordinary collection of notebooks, indelible pencils, card-cases, stamp-boxes, penknives, gold toothpicks, thermometers, and what not — that within twenty-four hours after he had donned new clothes all the artistic merits of the garments were obliterated; they were, from every point of view, hopelessly degenerate.

He was a scrupulously clean man, but there was a kind of civilized wildness in his appearance which astonished people; and in perverse moments he liked to terrify those who knew him but little by affirming that he was a near relative of Christopher Smart, and then explaining in mirth-provoking phrases that one of the arguments used for proving Smart's insanity was that he did not love clean linen.

His appetite was large, as became a large and active person. He was a very valiant trencher-

man; and yet he could not have been said to love eating for eating's sake. He ate when he was hungry, and found no difficulty in being hungry three times a day. He should have been an Englishman, for he enjoyed a late supper. In the proper season this consisted of a bountiful serving of tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, with a glass of lemonade. As a variant upon the beverage he took milk. He was the only man I have known, whether book-hunter or layman, who could sleep peacefully upon a supper of cucumbers and milk.

There is probably no occult relation between first editions and onions. The Bibliotaph was mightily pleased with both: the one, he said, appealed to him æsthetically, the other dietetically. He remarked of some particularly large Spanish onions that there was 'a globular wholesomeness about them which was very gratifying;' and after eating one he observed expansively that he felt 'as if he had swallowed the earth and the fullness thereof.' His easy, good-humored exaggerations and his odd comments upon the viands made him a pleasant table companion: as when he described a Parker House Sultana Roll by saying that 'it looked like the sanguinary output of the whole Crimean war.'

High-priced restaurants did not please him as well as humbler and less obtrusive places. But it was all one, — Delmonico's, the Bellevue,

a stool in the Twelfth Street Market, or a German café on Van Buren Street. The humors of certain eating-houses gave him infinite delight. He went frequently to the Diner's Own Home, the proprietor of which, being both cook and Christian, had hit upon the novel plan of giving Scriptural advice and practical suggestions by placards on the walls. The Bibliotaph enjoyed this juxtaposition of signs: the first read, 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly;' the second, 'Look out for your Hat and Coat.'

The Bibliotaph had no home, and was reputed to live in his post-office box. He contributed to the support of at least three clubs, but was very little seen at any one of them. He enjoyed the large cities, and was contented in whichever one he happened to find himself. He was emphatically a city man, but what city was of less import. He knew them all, and was happy in each. He had his favorite hotel, his favorite bath, his work, bushels of newspapers and periodicals, friends who rejoiced in his coming as children in the near advent of Christmas, and finally book-shops in which to browse at his pleasure. It was interesting to hear him talk about city life. One of his quaint mannerisms consisted in modifying a well-known quotation to suit his conversational needs. 'Why, sir,' he would remark, 'Fleet Street has a very animated appearance, but I

think the full tide of human existence is at the corner of Madison and State.'

His knowledge of cities was both extensive and peculiar. I have heard him name in order all the hotels on Broadway, beginning at the lower end and coming up as far as hotels exist, branching off upon the parallel and cross streets where there were noted caravansaries, and connecting every name with an event of importance, or with the life and fortunes of some noted man who had been guest at that particular inn. This was knowledge more becoming in a guide, perhaps, but it will illustrate the encyclopædic fullness of his miscellaneous information.

As was natural and becoming in a man born within forty miles of the metropolis, he liked best the large cities of the East, and was least content in small Western cities. But this was the outcome of no illiberal prejudice, and there was a quizzical smile upon his lips and a teasing look in his eyes when he bantered a Westerner. 'A man,' he would sometimes say, 'may come by the mystery of childbirth into Omaha or Kansas City and be content, but he can't come by Boston, New York, or Philadelphia.' Then, a moment later, paraphrasing his remark, he would add, 'To go to Omaha or Kansas City by way of New York and Philadelphia is like being translated heavenward with such violence that one *passes through* — into a less comfortable region!'

Strange to say, the conversation of this most omnivorous of book-collectors was less of books than of men. True, he was deeply versed in bibliographical details and dangerously accurate in his talk about them, but, after all, the personality back of the book was the supremely interesting thing. He abounded in anecdote, and could describe graphically the men he had met, the orators he had heard, the occasions of importance where he had been an interested spectator. His conversation was delightfully fresh and racy because of the vividness of the original impressions, the unusual force of the ideas which were the copies of these impressions, and the fine artistic sense which enabled him to determine at once what points should be omitted, and what words should be used most fittingly to express the ideas retained.

He had no pride in his conversational power. He was always modest, but never diffident. I have seen him sit, a respectful listener, absolutely silent, while some ordinary chatterer held the company's attention for an hour. Many good talkers are unhappy unless they have the privilege of exercising their gifts. Not so he. Sometimes he had almost to be compelled to begin. On such occasions one of his intimates was wont to quote from Boswell: 'Leave him to me, sir; I'll make him rear.'

The superficial parts of his talk were more easily retained. In mere banter, good-humored

give-and-take, that froth and bubble of conversational intercourse, he was delightful. His hostess, the wife of a well-known comedian, apologized to him for having to move him out of the large guest-chamber into another one, smaller and higher up, — this because of an unexpected accession of visitors. He replied that it did not incommode him; and as for being up another flight of stairs, 'it was a comfort to him to know that when he was in a state of somnolent helplessness he was as near heaven as it was possible to get in an actor's house.' The same lady was taking him roundly to task on some minor point in which he had quite justly offended her; whereupon he turned to her husband and said, 'Jane worships but little at the shrine of politeness because so much of her time is mortgaged to the shrine of truth.'

When asked to suggest an appropriate and brief cablegram to be sent to a gentleman who on the following day would become sixty years of age, and who had taken full measure of life's joys, he responded, 'Send him this: "*You don't look it, but you've lived like it.*"'

His skill in witty retort often expressed itself by accepting a verbal attack as justified, and elaborating it in a way to throw into shadow the assault of the critic. At a small and familiar supper of bookish men, when there was general dissatisfaction over an expensive but

ill-made salad, he alone ate with apparent relish. The host, who was of like mind with his guests, said, 'The Bibliotaph does n't care for the quality of his food, if it has filling power.' To which he at once responded, 'You merely imply that I am like a robin: I eat cherries when I may, and worms when I must.'

His inscriptions in books given to his friends were often singularly happy. He presented a copy of *Lowell's Letters* to a gentleman and his wife. The first volume was inscribed to the husband as follows: —

'To Mr. —— ——, who is to the owner of the second volume of these Letters what this volume is to that: so delightful as to make one glad that there 's another equally as good, if not better.'

In volume two was the inscription to the wife, worded in this manner: —

'To Mrs. —— ——, without whom the owner of the first volume of these Letters would be as that first volume without this one: interesting, but incomplete.'

Perhaps this will illustrate his quickness to seize upon ever so minute an occasion for the exercise of his humor. A young woman whom he admired, being brought up among brothers, had received the nickname, half affectionately and half patronizingly bestowed, of 'the Kid.' Among her holiday gifts for a certain year was a book from the Bibliotaph, a copy of *Old-*

Fashioned Roses, with this dedication: 'To a Kid, had Abraham possessed which, Isaac had been the burnt-offering.'

It is as a buyer and burier of books that the subject of this paper showed himself in most interesting light. He said that the time to make a library was when one was young. He held the foolish notion that a man does not purchase books after he is fifty; I shall expect to see him ransacking the shops after he is seventy, if he shall survive his eccentricities of diet that long. He was an omnivorous buyer, picking up everything he could lay his hands upon. Yet he had a clearly defined motive for the acquisition of every volume. However absurd the purchase might seem to the by-stander, he, at any rate, could have given six cogent reasons why he must have that particular book.

He bought according to the condition of his purse at a given time. If he had plenty of money, it would be expensive publications, like those issued by the Grolier Club. If he was financially depressed, he would hunt in the out-of-door shelves of well-known Philadelphia book-shops. It was marvelous to see what things, new and old, he was able to extract from a ten-cent alcove. Part of the secret lay in this idea: to be a good book-hunter one must not be too dainty; one must not be afraid of soiling one's hands. He who observes the clouds shall not

reap, and he who thinks of his cuffs is likely to lose many a bookish treasure. Our Bibliotaph generally parted company with his cuffs when he began hunting for books. How many times have I seen those cuffs with the patent fasteners sticking up in the air, as if reaching out helplessly for their owner; the owner in the mean time standing high upon a ladder which creaked under his weight, humming to himself as he industriously examined every volume within reach. This ability to live without cuffs made him prone to reject altogether that orthodox bit of finish to a toilet. I have known him to spend an entire day in New York between club, shops, and restaurant, with one cuff on, and the other cuff — its owner knew not where.

He differed from Heber in that he was not 'a classical scholar of the old school,' but there were many points in which he resembled the famous English collector. Heber would have acknowledged him as a son if only for his energy, his unquenchable enthusiasm, and the exactness of his knowledge concerning the books which he pretended to know at all. For not alone is it necessary that a collector should know precisely what book he wants; it is even more important that he should be able to know a book *as* the book he wants when he sees it. It is a lamentable thing to have fired in the dark, and then discover that you have shot a wandering mule, and not the noble game you

were in pursuit of. One cannot take his reference library with him to the shops. The tests, the criteria, must be carried in the head. The last and most inappropriate moment for getting up bibliographical lore is that moment when the pressing question is, to buy or not to buy. Master Slender, in the play, learned the difficulties which beset a man whose knowledge is in a book, and whose book is at home upon a shelf. It is possible to sympathize with him when he exclaims, 'I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here!' In making love there are other resources; all wooers are not as ill equipped as Slender was. But in hunting rare books the time will be sure to come when a man may well cry, 'I had rather than forty dollars I had my list of first editions with me!'

The Bibliotaph carried much accurate information in his head, but he never traveled without a thesaurus in his valise. It was a small volume containing printed lists of the first editions of rare books. The volume was interleaved; the leaves were crowded with manuscript notes. An appendix contained a hundred and more autograph letters from living authors, correcting, supplementing, or approving the printed bibliographies. Even these authors' own lists were accurately corrected. They needed it in not a few instances. For it is a wise author who knows his own first edition.

Men may write remarkable books, and understand but little the virtues of their books from the collector's point of view. Men are seldom clever in more ways than one. Z. Jackson was a practical printer, and his knowledge as a printer enabled him to correct sundry errors in the first folio of Shakespeare. But Z. Jackson, as the Rev. George Dawson observes, 'ventured beyond the composing-case, and, having corrected blunders made by the printers, corrected excellencies made by the poet.'

It was amusing to discover, by means of these autograph letters, how seldom a good author was an equally good bibliographer. And this is as it should be. The author's business is, not to take account of first editions, but to make books of such virtue that bibliomaniacs shall be eager to possess the first editions thereof. It is proverbial that a poet is able to show a farmer things new to him about his own farm. Turn a bibliographer loose upon a poet's works, and he will amaze the poet with an account of *his* own doings. The poet will straightway discover that while he supposed himself to be making 'mere literature' he was in reality contributing to an elaborate and exact science.

The Bibliotaph was not a blind enthusiast on the subject of first editions. He was one of the few men who understood the exceeding great virtues of second editions. He declared

that a man who was so fortunate as to secure a second edition of Henry Crabb Robinson's *Diary* was in better case than he who had bothered himself to obtain a first. When it fell in with his mood to argue against that which he himself most affected, he would quote the childish bit of doggerel beginning 'The first the worst, the second the same,' and then grow eloquent over the dainty Templeman Hazlitts which are chiefly third editions. He thought it absurd to worry over a first issue of Carlyle's *French Revolution* if it were possible to buy at moderate price a copy of the third edition, which is a well-nigh perfect book, 'good to the touch and grateful to the eye.' But this lover of books grew fierce in his special mania if you hinted that it was also foolish to spend a large sum on an *editio princeps* of *Paradise Lost* or of *Robinson Crusoe*. There are certain authors concerning the desirability of whose first editions it must not be disputed.

The singular readiness with which bookish treasures fell into his way astonished less fortunate buyers. Rare Stevensons dropped into his hand like ripe fruit from a tree. The most inaccessible of pamphlets fawned upon him, begging to be purchased, just as the succulent little roast pigs in *The New Paul and Virginia* run about with knives and forks in their sides pleading to be eaten. The Bibliotaph said he did not despair of buying Poe's *Tamerlane* for

twenty-five cents one of these days; and that a rarity he was sure to get sooner or later was a copy of that English newspaper which announced Shelley's death under the caption *Now he Knows whether there is a Hell or Not.*

He unconsciously followed Heber in that he disliked large-paper copies. Heber would none of them because they took up too much room; their ample borders encroached upon the rights of other books. Heber objected to this as Prosper Mérimée objected to the gigantic English hoopskirts of 1865, — there was space on Regent Street for but one woman at a time.

Original as the Bibliotaph was in appearance, manners, habits, he was less striking in what he did than in what he said. It is a pity that no record of his talk exists. It is not surprising that there is no such record, for his habits of wandering precluded the possibility of his making a permanent impression. By the time people had fully awakened to the significance of his presence among them he was gone. So there grew up a legend concerning him, but no true biography. He was like a comet, very shaggy and very brilliant, but he stayed so brief a time in a place that it was impossible for one man to give either the days or the thought to the reproduction of his more serious and considered words. A greater difficulty was involved in the fact that the Bibliotaph had many socii, but no fidus Achates. Moreover,

Achates, in this instance, would have needed the reportorial powers of a James Boswell that he might properly interpret genius to the public.

This particular genius illustrated the misfortune of having too great facility in establishing those relations which lie midway between acquaintance and friendship. To put the matter in the form of a paradox, he had so many *friends* that he had no *friend*. Perhaps this is unjust, but friendship has a touch of jealousy and exclusiveness in it. He was too large-natured to say to one of his admirers, 'Thou shalt have no other gods save myself;' but there were those among the admirers who were quite prepared to say to him, 'We prefer that thou shalt have no other worshipers in addition to us.'

People wondered that he seemed to have no care for a conventional home life. He was taxed with want of sympathy with what makes even a humble home a centre of light and happiness. He denied it, and said to his accusers, 'Can you not understand that after a stay in *your* home I go away with much the feeling that must possess a lusty young calf when his well-equipped mother tells him that henceforth he must find means of sustenance elsewhere?'

He professed to have been once in love, but no one believed it. He used to say that his most remarkable experience as a bachelor was in noting the uniformity with which eligible

young women passed him by on the other side of the way. And when a married friend offered condolence, with that sleek complacency of manner noteworthy in men who are conscious of being mated for life better than they deserve, the Bibliotaph said, with an admiring glance at the wife, 'Your sympathy is supererogatory, sir, for I fully expect to become your residuary legatee.'

It is most pleasing to think of this unique man 'buffeting his books' in one of those temporary libraries which formed about him whenever he stopped four or five weeks in a place. The shops were rifled of not a few of their choicest possessions, and the spoils carried off to his room. It was a joy to see him display his treasures, a delight to hear him talk of them. He would disarm criticism with respect to the more eccentric purchases by saying, 'You would n't approve of this, but *I* thought it was curious,' — and then a torrent of facts, criticisms, quotations, all bearing upon the particular volume which you were supposed not to like; and so on, hour after hour. There was no limit save that imposed by the receptive capacity of the guest. It reminded one of the word spoken concerning a 'hard sitter at books' of the last century, that he was a literary giant 'born to grapple with whole libraries.' But the fine flavor of those hours spent in hearing him discourse upon books and men is not to be

recovered. It is evanescent, spectral, now. This talk was like the improvisation of a musician who is profoundly learned, but has in him a vein of poetry too. The talk and the music strongly appeal to robust minds, and at the same time do not repel the sentimentalist.

It is not to be supposed that the Bibliotaph pleased every one with whom he came in contact. There were people whom his intellectual potency affected in a disagreeable way. They accused him of applying great mental force to inconsidered trifles. They said it was a misfortune that so much talent was going to waste. But there is no task so easy as criticising an able man's employment of his gifts.

THE BIBLIOTAPH: HIS FRIENDS, SCRAP-BOOKS, AND 'BINS'

To arrive at a high degree of pleasure in collecting a library, one must travel. The Bibliotaph regularly traveled in search of his volumes. His theory was that the collector must go to the book, not wait for the book to come to him. No reputable sportsman, he said, would wish the game brought alive to his back-yard for him to kill. Half the pleasure was in tracking the quarry to its hiding-place. He himself ordered but seldom from catalogues, and went regularly to and fro among the dealers in books, seeking the volume which his heart desired. He enjoyed those shops where the book-seller kept open house, where the stock was large and surprises were common, where the proprietor was prodigiously well-informed on some points and correspondingly ill-informed on others. He bought freely, never disputed a price, and laid down his cash with the air of a man who believes that unspent money is the root of all evil.

These travels brought about three results:

the making of friends, the compilation of scrap-books, and the establishment of 'bins.' Before speaking of any one of these points, a word on the satisfactions of bibliographical touring.

In every town of considerable size, and in many towns of inconsiderable size, are book-shops. It is a poor shop which does not contain at least one good book. This book bides its time, and usually outstays its welcome. But its fate is about its neck. Somewhere there is a collector to whom that book is precious. They are made for one another, the collector and the book; and it is astonishing how infrequently they miss of realizing their mutual happiness. The book-seller is a marriage-broker for unwedded books. His business is to find them homes, and take a fee for so doing. Sugarman the Shadchan was not more zealous than is your vendor of rare books.

Now, it is a curious fact that the most desirable of bookish treasures are often found where one would be least likely to seek them. Montana is a great State, nevertheless one does not think of going to Montana for early editions of Shakespeare. Let the book-hunter inwardly digest the following plain tale of a clergyman and a book of plays.

There is a certain collector who is sometimes called 'The Bishop.' He is not a bishop, but he may be so designated; coming events have been known to cast conspicuous shadows in

the likeness of mitre and crosier. The Bishop heard of a man in Montana who had an old book of plays with an autograph of William Shakespeare pasted in it. Being a wise ecclesiastic, he did not exclaim 'Tush' and 'Fie,' but proceeded at once to go book-hunting in Montana. He went by proxy, if not in person; the journey is long. In due time the owner of the volume was found and the book was placed in the Bishop's hands for inspection. He tore off the wrappers, and lo! it was a Fourth Folio of Shakespeare excellently well preserved, and with what appeared to be the great dramatist's signature written on a slip of paper and pasted inside the front cover. The problem of the genuineness of that autograph does not concern us. The great fact is that a Shakespeare folio turned up in Montana. Now when he hears some one express desire for a copy of Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, or any other rare book of Elizabeth's time, the Bishop's thoughts fly toward the setting sun. Then he smiles a notable kind of smile, and says, 'If I could get away I'd run out to Montana and try to pick up a copy for you.'

There is a certain gentleman who loves the literature of Queen Anne's reign. He lives with Whigs and Tories, vibrates between coffee-house and tea-table. He annoys his daughter by sometimes calling her 'Belinda,' and astonishes his wife with his mock-heroic apos-

trophes to her hood and patches. He reads his *Spectator* at breakfast while other people batten upon newspapers only three hours old. He smiles over the love-letters of Richard Steele, and reverences the name and the writings of Joseph Addison. Indeed, his devotion to Addison is so radical that he has actually been guilty of reading *The Campaign* and the *Dialogue on Medals*. This gentleman hunted books one day and was not successful. It seemed to him that on this particular afternoon the world was stuffed with Allison's histories of Europe, and Jeffrey's contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*. His heart was filled with bitterness and his nostrils with dust. Books which looked inviting turned out to be twenty-second editions. Of fifty things upon his list not one came to light. But it was predestined that he should not go sorrowing to his home. He pulled out from a bottom shelf two musty octavo volumes bound in dark brown leather, and each securely tied with a string; for the covers had been broken from the backs. The titles were invisible, the contents a mystery. The gentleman held the unpromising objects in his hand and meditated upon them. They might be a treatise on conic sections, or a Latin Grammar, and again they might be a Book. He untied the string and opened one of the volumes. Was it a breath of summer air from Isis that swept out of those pages, which were as white as snow

in spite of the lapse of nearly two centuries? He read the title, MUSARUM ANGLICANARUM ANALECTA. The date was 1699. He turned to the table of contents, and his heart gave a contented throb. There was the name he wished to see, J. Addison, Magd. Coll. The name occurred eight times. The dejected collector had found a clean and uncut copy of those two volumes of contemporary Latin verse compiled by Joseph Addison, when he was a young man at Oxford, and printed at the Sheldonian Theatre. Addison contributed eight poems to the second volume. The bookseller was willing to take seventy-five cents for the set, and told the gentleman as he did up the package that he was a comfort to the trade.

That night the gentleman read *The Battle of the Pigmies and the Cranes*, while his wife read the evening edition of the *Lurid Paragraph*. Now he says to his friends, 'Hunt books in the most unpromising places, but make a thorough search. You may not discover a Koh-i-noor, but you will be pretty sure to run upon some desirable little thing which gives you pleasure and costs but a trifle.'

One effect of this adventure upon himself is that he cannot pass a volume which is tied with a string. He spends his days and Saturday nights in tying and untying books with broken covers. Even the evidence of a clearly-lettered title upon the back fails to satisfy him. He is

restless until he has made a thorough search in the body of the volume.

The Bibliotaph's own best strokes of fortune were made in out-of-the-way places. But some god was on his side. For at his approach the bibliographical desert blossomed like the rose. He used to hunt books in Texas at one period in his life; and out of Texas would he come, bringing, so it is said, first editions of George Borrow and Jane Austen. It was maddening to be with him at such times, especially if one had a gift for envy.

Yet why should one envy him his money, or his unerring hand and eye? He paid for the book, but it was yours to read and to caress so long as you would. If he took it from you it was only that he might pass it on to some other friend. But if that volume once started in the direction of the great tomb of books in Westchester County, no power on earth could avail to restore it to the light of day.

It is pleasant to meditate upon past journeys with the Bibliotaph. He was an incomparable traveling companion, buoyant, philosophic, incapable of fatigue, and never ill. Yet it is a tradition current, that he, the mighty, who called himself a friend to physicians, because he never robbed them of their time either in or out of office-hours, once succumbed to that irritating little malady known as car-sickness. He succumbed, but he met his fate bravely and

with the colors of his wit flying. The circumstances are these: —

There is a certain railway thoroughfare which justly prides itself upon the beauty of its scenery. This road passes through a hill-country, and what it gains in the picturesque it loses in that rectilinear directness most grateful to the traveler with a sensitive stomach. The Bibliotaph often patronized this thoroughfare, and one day it made him sick. As the train swept around a sharp curve, he announced his earliest symptom by saying: 'The conspicuous advantages of this road are that one gets views of the scenery and reviews of his meals.'

A few minutes later he suggested that the road would do well to change its name, and hereafter be known as 'The Emetic G. and O.'

They who were with him proffered sympathy, but he refused to be pitied. He thought he had a remedy. He discovered that by taking as nearly as possible a reclining posture, he got temporary relief. He kept settling more and more till at last he was nearly on his back. Then he said: 'If it be true that the lower down we get the more comfortable we are, the basements of Hell will have their compensations.'

He was too ill to say much after this, but his last word, before the final and complete extinction of his manhood, was, 'The influence of this road is such that employees have been known involuntarily to throw up their jobs.'

The Bibliotaph invariably excited comment and attention when he was upon his travels. I do not think he altogether liked it. Perhaps he neither liked it nor disliked it. He accepted the fact that he was not as other men quite as he would have accepted any indisputable fact. He used occasionally to express annoyance because of the discrepancy between his reputation and appearance; in other words, because he seemed a man of greater fame than he was. He suffered the petty discomforts of being a personage, and enjoyed none of the advantages. He declared that he was quite willing to be much more distinguished or much less conspicuous. What he objected to was the Laodicean character of his reputation as set over against the pronounced and even startling character of his looks and manner.

He used also to note with amusement how indelible a mark certain early ambitions and tentative studies had made upon him. People invariably took him for a clergyman. They decided this at once and conducted themselves accordingly. He made no protest, but observed that their convictions as to how they should behave in his presence had corollaries in the shape of very definite convictions as to how he should carry himself before them. He thought that such people might be described as moral trainers. They do not profess virtue themselves, but they take a real pleasure in keeping you up to your profession.

The Bibliotaph had no explanation to give why he was so immediately and invariably accounted as one in orders. He was quite sure that the clerical look was innate, and by no means dependent upon the wearing of a high vest or a Joseph Parker style of whisker; for once as he sat in the hot room of a Turkish bath and in the Adamitic simplicity of attire suitable to the temperature and the place, a gentleman who occupied the chair nearest introduced conversation by saying, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but are you not a clergyman?'

'This incident,' said the Bibliotaph, 'gave me a vivid sense of the possibility of determining a man's profession by a cursory examination of his cuticle.' Lowell's conviction about N. P. Willis was well-founded: namely, that if it had been proper to do so, Willis could have worn his own plain bare skin in a way to suggest that it was a representative Broadway tailor's best work.

I imagine that few boys escape an outburst of that savage instinct for personal adornment which expresses itself in the form of rude tattooing upon the arms. The Bibliotaph had had his attack in early days, and the result was a series of decorations of a highly patriotic character, and not at all in keeping with South Kensington standards. I said to him once, apropos of the pictures on his arms: 'You are a great surprise to your friends in this particu-

lar.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'few of them are aware that the volume of this Life is extra-illustrated.'

But that which he of necessity tolerated in himself he would not tolerate in his books. They were not allowed to become pictorially amplified. He saw no objection to inserting a rare portrait in a good book. It did not necessarily injure the book, and it was one way of preserving the portrait. Yet the thing was questionable, and it was likely to prove the first step in a downward path. As to cramming a volume with a heterogeneous mass of pictures and letters gathered from all imaginable sources, he held the practice in abhorrence, and the bibliographical results as fit only for the libraries of the illiterate rich. He admitted the possibility of doing such a thing well or ill; but at its best it was an ill thing skillfully done.

The Bibliotaph upon his travels was a noteworthy figure if only because of the immense parcel of books with which he burdened himself. That part of the journeying public which loves to see some new thing puzzled itself mightily over the gentleman of full habit, who in addition to his not inconsiderable encumbrance of flesh and luggage, chose to carry about a shawl-strap loaded to utmost capacity with a composite mass of books, magazines, and newspapers. It was enormously heavy, and the way in which its component parts adhered was but a degree short of the miraculous. He

appeared hardly conscious of its weight, for he would pick the thing up and literally *trip* with it on a toe certainly not light, but undeniably fantastic.

He carried the books about with him partly because he had just purchased them and wished to study their salient points, and partly because he was taking them to a 'bin.' There is no mystery about these 'bins.' They were merely places of temporary rest for the books before the grand moving to the main library. But if not mysterious they were certainly astonishing, because of their number and size. With respect to number, one in every large city was the rule. With respect to size, few people buy in a lifetime as many books as were sometimes heaped together in one of these places of deposit. He would begin by leaving a small bundle of books with some favorite dealer, then another, and then another. As the collection enlarged, the accommodations would be increased; for it was a satisfaction to do the Bibliotaph this favor, he purchased so liberally and tipped the juvenile clerks in so royal a manner. Nor was he always in haste to move out after he had once moved in. One bookseller, speaking of the splendid proportions which the 'bin' was assuming, declared that he sometimes found it difficult to adjust himself mentally to the situation; he could n't tell when he came to his place of business in the morning

whether he was in his own shop or the Bibliotaph's library.

The corner of the shop where the great collector's accumulations were piled up was a centre of mirth and conversation if he himself chanced to be in town. Men dropped in for a minute and stayed an hour. In some way time appeared to broaden and leisure to grow more ample. Life had an unusual richness, and warmth, and color, when the Bibliotaph was by. There was an Olympian largeness and serenity about him. He seemed almost pagan in the breadth of his hold upon existence. And when he departed he left behind him what can only be described as great unfilled mental spaces. I recall that a placard was hung up in his particular corner with the inscription, 'English spoken here.' This amused him. Later there was attached to it another strip upon which was crayoned, 'Sir, we had much good talk,' with the date of the talk. Still later a victim added the words, 'Yes, sir, on that day the Bibliotaph tossed and gored a number of people admirably.'

It was difficult for the Bibliotaph not to emit intellectual sparks of one kind or another. His habit of dealing with every fact as if it deserved his entire mental force, was a secret of his originality. Everything was worth while. If the fact was a serious fact, all the strength of his mind would be applied to its exposition

or defense. If it was a fact of less importance, humor would appear as a means to the conversational end. And he would grow more humorous as the topics grew less significant. When finally he rioted in mere word-play, banter, quizzing, it was a sign that he regarded the matter as worthy no higher species of notice.

I like this theory of his wit so well that I am minded not to expose it to an over-rigid test. The following small fragments of his talk are illustrative of such measure of truth as the theory may contain.

Among the Bibliotaph's companions was one towards whose mind he affected the benevolent and encouraging attitude of a father to a budding child. He was asked by this friend to describe a certain quaint and highly successful entertainer. This was the response: 'The gentleman of whom you speak has the habit of coming before his audience as an idiot and retiring as a genius. You and I, sir, could n't do that; we should sustain the first character consistently throughout the entire performance.'

It was his humor to insist that all the virtues and gifts of a distinguished collector were due for their expansion and development to association with himself and the writer of these memories. He would say in the presence of the distinguished collector: 'Henry will probably one day forget us, but on the Day of Judgment, in any just estimate of the causes of his success, the Lord won't.'

I have forgotten what the victim's retort was; it is safe to assume that it was adequate.

This same collector had the pleasing habit of honoring the men he loved, among whom the Bibliotaph was chief, with brightly written letters which filled ten and fifteen half-sheets. But the average number of words to a line was two, while a five-syllable word had trouble in accommodating itself to a line and a half, and the sheets were written only upon one side. The Bibliotaph's comment was: 'Henry has a small brain output, but unlimited influence at a paper-mill.'

Of all the merry sayings in which the Bibliotaph indulged himself at the expense of his closest friend this was the most comforting. A gentleman present was complaining that Henry took liberties in correcting his pronunciation. 'I have no doubt of the occasional need of such correction, but it is n't often required, and not half so often as he seems to think. I, on the other hand, observe frequent minor slips in his use of language, but I do not feel at liberty to correct him.'

The Bibliotaph began to apply salve to the bruised feelings of the gentleman present as follows: 'The animus of Henry's criticism is unquestionably envy. He probably feels how few flies there are in your ointment. While you are astonished that in his case there should be so little ointment for so many flies.'

The Bibliotaph never used slang, and the united recollections of his associates can adduce but two or three instances in which he sunk verbally so low as even to *hint* slang. He said that there was one town which in his capacity of public speaker he should like to visit. It was a remote village in Virginia where there was a girls' seminary, the catalogue of which set forth among advantages of location this: that the town was one to which the traveling lecturer and the circus never came. The Bibliotaph said, 'I should go there. For I am the one when I am on the platform, and by the unanimous testimony of all my friends I am the other when I am off.'

The second instance not only illustrates his ingenuity in trifles, but also shows how he could occasionally answer a friend according to his folly. He had been describing a visit which he had made in the hero-worshiping days of boyhood to Chappaqua; how friendly and good-natured the great farmer-editor was; how he called the Bibliotaph 'Bub,' and invited him to stay to dinner; how he stayed and talked politics with his host; how they went out to the barn afterwards to look at the stock; what Greeley said to him and what he said to Greeley, — it was a perfect bit of word-sketching, spontaneous, realistic, homely, unpretentious, irresistibly comic because of the quaintness of the dialogue as reported, and because of the

mental image which we formed of this large-headed, round-bellied, precocious youth, who at the age of sixteen was able for three consecutive hours to keep the conversational shuttlecock in the air with no less a person than Horace Greeley. Amid the laughter and comment which followed the narration one mirthful genius who chose for the day to occupy the seat of the scorner, called out to the Bibliotaph: —

'How old did you say you were at that time, "Bub"?'

'Sixteen.'

'And did you wear whiskers?'

The query was insulting. But the Bibliotaph measured the flippancy of the remark with his eye and instantly fitted an answer to the mental needs of the questioner.

'Even if I had,' he said, 'it would have availed me nothing, for in those days there was no wind.'

The Bibliotaph was most at home in the book-shop, on the street, or at his hotel. He went to public libraries only in an emergency, for he was impatient of that needful discipline which compelled him to ask for each volume he wished to see. He had, however, two friends in whose libraries one might occasionally meet him in the days when he hunted books upon this wide continent. One was the gentleman to whom certain letters on literature have

been openly addressed, and who has made a library by a process which involves wise selection and infinite self-restraint. This priceless little collection contains no volume which is imperfect, no volume which mars the fine sense of repose begotten in one at the sight of lovely books becomingly clothed, and no volume which is not worthy the name of literature. And there is matter for reflection in the thought that it is not the library of a rich man. Money cannot buy the wisdom which has made this collection what it is, and without self-denial it is hardly possible to give the touch of real elegance to a private library. When dollars are not counted the assemblage of books becomes promiscuous. How may we better describe this library than by the phrase Infinite riches in a little book-case!

There was yet another friend, the Country Squire, who revels in wealth, buys large-paper copies, reads little but deeply, and raises chickens. His library (the room itself, I mean) is a gentleman's library, with much cornice, much plate-glass, and much carving; whereof a wit said, 'The Squire has such a beautiful library, and no place to put his books.'

These books are of a sort to rejoice the heart, but their tenure of occupancy is uncertain. Hardly one of them but is liable to eviction without a moment's notice. They have a look in their attitude which indicates conscious-

ness of being pilgrims and strangers. They seem to say, 'We can tarry, we can tarry but a night.' Some have tarried two nights, others a week, others a year, a few even longer. But aside from a dozen or so of volumes, not one of the remaining three thousand dares to affirm that it holds a permanent place in its owner's heart of hearts. It is indeed a noble procession of books which has passed in and out of those doors. A day will come in which the owner realizes that he has as good as the market can furnish, and then banishments will cease. One sighs not for the volumes which deserved exile, but for those which were sent away because their master ceased to love them.

There was no friend with whom the Bibliotaph lived on easier terms than with the Country Squire. They were counterparts. They supplemented one another. The Bibliotaph, though he was born and bred on a farm, had fled for his salvation to the city. The Squire, a man of city birth and city education, had fled for his soul's health to the country; he had rendered existence almost perfect by setting up an urban home in rural surroundings. It was well said of that house that it was finely reticent in its proffers of hospitality, and regally magnificent in its kindness to those whom it delighted to honor.

It was in the Country Squire's library that the Bibliotaph first met that actor with whom

he became even more intimate than with the Squire himself. The closeness of their relation suggested the days of the old Miracle plays when the theatre and the Church were as hand in glove. The Bibliotaph signified his appreciation of his new friend by giving him a copy of a sixteenth-century book 'containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth.' The Player in turn compiled for his friend of clerical appearance a scrap-book, intended to show how evil associations corrupt good actors.

This actor professed that which for want of a better term might be called parlor agnosticism. The Bibliotaph was sturdily inclined towards orthodoxy, and there was from time to time collision between the two. It is my impression that the actor sometimes retired with four of his five wits halting. But he was brilliant even when he mentally staggered. Neither antagonist convinced the other, and after a while they grew wearied of traveling over one another's minds.

It fell out on a day that the actor made a fine speech before a large gathering, and mindful of stage effect he introduced a telling allusion to an all-wise and omnipotent Providence. For this he was, to use his own phrase, 'soundly spanked' by all his friends; that is, he was mocked at, jeered, ridiculed. To what end,

they said, was one an agnostic if he weakly yielded his position to the exigencies of an after-dinner speech. The Bibliotaph alone took pains to analyze his late antagonist's position. He wrote to the actor congratulating him upon his success. 'I wondered a little at this, remembering how inconsiderable has been your practice; and I infer that it has been inconsiderable, for I am aware how seldom an actor can be persuaded to make a speech. I, too, was at first shocked when I heard that you had made a respectful allusion to Deity; but I presently took comfort, *remembering that your gods, like your grease-paints, are purely professional.*'

He was always capital in these teasing moods. To be sure, he buffeted one about tremendously, but his claws were sheathed, and there was a contagiousness in his frolicsome humor. Moreover one learned to look upon one's self in the light of a public benefactor. To submit to be knocked about by the Bibliotaph was in a modest way to contribute to the gayety of nations. If one was not absolutely happy one's self, there was a chastened comfort in beholding the happiness of the on-lookers.

A small author wrote a small book, so small that it could be read in less time than it takes to cover an umbrella, that is, 'while you wait.' The Bibliotaph had Brobdingnagian joy of this book. He sat and read it to himself in the author's presence, and particularly diminutive

that book appeared as its light cloth cover was outlined against the Bibliotaph's ample black waistcoat. From time to time he would vent 'a series of small private laughs,' especially if he was on the point of announcing some fresh illustration of the fallibility of inexperienced writers. Finally the uncomfortable author said, 'Don't sit there and pick out the mistakes.' To which the Bibliotaph triumphantly replied, 'What other motive is there for reading it at all?'

He purchased every copy of this book which he could find, and when asked by the author why he did so, replied, 'In order to withdraw it from circulation.' A moment afterwards he added reflectively, 'But how may I hope to withdraw a book from that which it has never had?'

He was apt to be severe in his judgment of books, as when he said of a very popular but very feeble literary performance that it was an argument for the existence of God. 'Such intensity of stupidity was not realized without Infinite assistance.'

He could be equally emphatic in his comments upon men. Among his acquaintance was a church dignitary who blew alternately hot and cold upon him. When advised of some new illustration of the divine's uncertainty of attitude, the Bibliotaph merely said, 'He's more of a chameleon than he is a clergyman.'

That Bostonian would be deficient in wit who failed to enjoy this remark. Speaking of the characteristics of American cities, the Bibliotaph said, 'It never occurs to the Hub that anything of importance can possibly happen at the periphery.'

He greatly admired the genial and philanthropic editor of a well-known Philadelphia newspaper. Shortly after Mr. Childs's death some one wrote to the Bibliotaph that in a quiet Kentucky town he had noticed a sign over a shop-door which read, 'G. W. Childs, dealer in Tobacco and Cigars.' There was something graceful in the Bibliotaph's reply. He expressed surprise at Mr. Childs's new occupation, but declared that for his own part he was 'glad to know that the location of Heaven had at last been definitely ascertained.'

The Bibliotaph habitually indulged himself in the practice of hero-worship. This propensity led him to make those glorified scrap-books which were so striking a feature in his collection. They were no commonplace affairs, the ugly result of a union of cheap leather, newspaper-clippings and paste, but sumptuous books resplendent in morocco and gilt tooling, the creations of an artist who was eminent among binders. These scrap-books were chiefly devoted to living men, — men who were famous, or who were believed to be on the high road to fame. There was a book for each man. In this

way did the Bibliotaph burn incense before his Dii majores et minores.

These books were enriched with everything that could illustrate the gifts and virtues of the men in whose honor they were made. They contained rare manuscripts, rare pictures, autograph comments and notes, a bewildering variety of records, — memorabilia which were above price. Poets wrote humorous verse, and artists who justly held their time as too precious to permit of their working for love decorated the pages of the Bibliotaph's scrap-books. One does not abuse the word 'unique' when he applies it to these striking volumes.

The Bibliotaph did not always follow contemporary judgment in his selection of men to be so canonized. He now and then honored a man whose sense of the relation of achievement to fame would not allow him to admit to himself that he deserved the distinction, and whose sense of humor could not but be strongly excited at the thought of deification by so unusual a process. It might be pleasant to consider that the Bibliotaph cared so much for one's letters as to wish not to destroy them, but it was awful to think of those letters as bound and annotated. This was to get a taste of posthumous fame before posthumous fame was due. The Bibliotaph added a new terror to life, for he compelled one to live up to one's scrap-book. He reversed the old Pagan for-

mula, which was to the effect that 'So-and-So died and was made a god.' According to the Bibliotaph's prophetic method, a man was made a god first and allowed to die at his leisure afterward. Not every one of that little company which his wisdom and love have marked for great reputation will be able to achieve it. They are unanimously grateful that he cared enough for them to wish to drag their humble gifts into the broad light of publicity. But their gratitude is tempered by the thought that perhaps he was only elaborately humorous at their expense.

The Bibliotaph's intellectual processes were so vigorous and his pleasure in mental activity for its own sake was so intense that he was quite capable of deciding after a topic of discussion had been introduced which side he would take. And this with a splendid disdain of the merits of the cause which he espoused. I remember that he once set out to maintain the thesis that a certain gentleman, as notable for his virtues as he was conspicuous for lack of beauty, was essentially a handsome man. The person who initiated the discussion by observing that 'Mr. Blank was unquestionably a plain man' expected from the Bibliotaph (if he expected any remark whatever) nothing beyond a Platonic 'That I do most firmly believe.' He was not a little astonished when the great book-collector began an elaborate and exhaustive defense of

the gentleman whose claims to beauty had been questioned. At first it was dialogue, and the opponent had his share of talk; but when in an unlucky moment he hinted that such energy could only be the result of consciousness on the Bibliotaph's part that he was in a measure pleading his own cause, the dialogue changed to monologue. For the Bibliotaph girded up his loins and proceeded to smite his opponent hip and thigh. All in good humor, to be sure, and laughter reigned, but it was tremendous and it was logically convincing. It was clearly not safe to have a reputation for good looks while the Bibliotaph was in this temper. All the gentlemen were in terror lest something about their countenances might be construed as beauty, and men with good complexions longed for newspapers behind which to hide their disgrace.

As for the disputant who had stirred up the monster, his situation was as unenviable as it was comic to the bystanders. He had never before dropped a stone into the great geyser. He was therefore unprepared for the result. One likened him to an unprotected traveler in a heavy rain-storm. For the Bibliotaph's unpremeditated speech was a very cloud-burst of eloquence. The unhappy gentleman looked despairingly in every direction as if beseeching us for the loan of a word-proof umbrella. There was none to be had. We who had known a

like experience were not sorry to stand under cover and watch a fellow mortal undergo this verbal drenching. The situation recalled one described by Lockhart when a guest differed on a point of scholarship with the great Coleridge. Coleridge began to 'exert himself.' He burst into a steady stream of talk which broadened and deepened as the moments fled. When finally it ceased the bewildered auditor pulled himself together and exclaimed, 'Zounds, I was never so *be-thumped* with words in my life!'

People who had opportunity of observing the Bibliotaph were tempted to speculate on what he might have become if he had not chosen to be just what he was. His versatility led them to declare for this, that, and the other profession, largely in accordance with their own personal preferences. Lawyers were sure that he should have been an advocate; ministers that he would have done well to yield to the 'call' he had in his youth; teachers were positive that he would have made an inspiring teacher. No one, so far as I know, ever told him that in becoming a book-collector he had deprived the world of a great musician; for he was like Charles Lamb in that he was sentimentally inclined to harmony but organically incapable of a tune.

Yet he was so broad-minded that it was not possible for him to hold even a neutral attitude

in the presence of anything in which other people delighted. I have known him to sit through a long and heavy organ recital, not in a resigned manner but actively attentive, clearly determined that if the minutest portion of his soul was sensitive to the fugues of J. S. Bach he would allow that portion to bask in the sunshine of an unwonted experience. So that from one point of view he was the incarnation of tolerance as he certainly was the incarnation of good-humor and generosity. He envied no man his gifts from Nature or Fortune. He was not only glad to let live, but painstakingly energetic in making the living of people a pleasure to them, and he received with amused placidity adverse comments upon himself.

Words which have been used to describe a famous man of this century I will venture to apply in part to the Bibliotaph. 'He was a kind of gigantic and Olympian school-boy, . . . loving-hearted, bountiful, wholesome and sterling to the heart's core.'

LAST WORDS ON THE BIBLIOTAPH

THE Bibliotaph's major passion was for collecting books; but he had a minor passion, the bare mention of which caused people to lift their eyebrows suspiciously. He was a shameless, a persistent, and a successful hunter of autographs. His desire was for the signatures of living men of letters, though an occasional dead author would be allowed a place in the collection, provided he had not been dead too long. As a rule, however, the Bibliotaph coveted the 'hand of write' of the man who was now more or less conspicuously in the public eye. This autograph must be written in a representative work of the author in question. The Bibliotaph would not have crossed the street to secure a line from Ben Jonson's pen, but he mourned because the autograph of the Rev. C. L. Dodgson was not forthcoming, nor likely to be. His conception of happiness was this: to own a copy of the first edition of *Alice in Wonderland*, upon the fly-leaf of which Lewis Carroll had written his name, together with the statement that he had done so at the Bibliotaph's request, and because that eminent

collector could not be made happy in any other way.

The Bibliotaph liked the autograph of the modern man of letters because it *was* modern, and because there was a reasonable hope of its being genuine. He loved genuineness. Everything about himself was exactly what it pretended to be. From his soul to his clothing he was honest. And his love for the genuine was only surpassed in degree by his contempt for the spurious. I remember that some one gave him a bit of silverware, a toilet article, perhaps, which he next day threw out of a car window, because he had discovered that it was not sterling. He scouted the suggestion that possibly the giver may not have known. Such ignorance was inexcusable, he said. 'The likelier interpretation was that the gift was symbolical of the giver.' The act seemed brutal, and the comment thereon even more so. But to realize the atmosphere, the setting of the incident, one must imagine the Bibliotaph's round and comfortable figure, his humorous look, and the air of genial placidity with which he would do and say a thing like this. It was as impossible to be angry with him in behalf of the unfortunate giver of cheap silver as to take offense at a tree or mountain. And it was useless to argue the matter — nay it was folly, for he would immediately become polysyllabic and talk one down.

It was this desire for genuine things which made him entirely suspicious of autographs which had been bought and sold. He had no faith in them, and he would weaken your faith, supposing you were a collector of such things. Offer him an autograph of our first president and he would reply, 'I don't believe that it 's genuine ; and if it were I should n't care for it ; I never had the honor of General Washington's acquaintance.' The inference was that one could have a personal relation with a living great man, and the chances were largely in favor of getting an autograph that was not an object of suspicion.

Few collectors in this line have been as happy as the Bibliotaph. The problem was easily mastered with respect to the majority of authors. As a rule an author is not unwilling to give such additional pleasure to a reader of his book as may consist in writing his name in the reader's copy. It is conceivable that the author may be bored by too many requests of this nature, but he might be bored to an even greater degree if no one cared enough for him to ask for his autograph. Some writers resisted a little, and it was beautiful to see the Bibliotaph bring them to terms. He was a highwayman of the Tom Faggus type, just so adroit, and courteous, and daring. He was perhaps at his best in cases where he had actually to hold up his victim ; one may ima-

gine the scene, — the author resisting, the Bibliotaph determined and having the masterful air of an expert who had handled just such cases before.

A humble satellite who disapproved of these proceedings read aloud to the Bibliotaph that scorching little essay entitled *Involuntary Bailees*, written by perhaps the wittiest living English essayist. An involuntary bailee — as the essayist explains — is a person to whom people (generally unknown to him) send things which he does not wish to receive, but which *they* are anxious to have returned. If a man insists upon lending you a book, you become an involuntary bailee. You don't wish to read the book, but you have it in your possession. It has come to you by post, let us suppose, 'and to pack it up and send it back again requires a piece of string, energy, brown paper, and stamps enough to defray the postage.' And it is a question whether a casual acquaintance 'has any right thus to make demands on a man's energy, money, time, brown paper, string, and other capital and commodities.' There are other ways of making a man an involuntary bailee. You may ask him to pass judgment on your poetry, or to use his influence to get your tragedy produced, or to do any one of a half hundred things which he does n't want to do and which you have no business to ask him to do. The essayist makes no mention of the

particular form of sin which the Bibliotaph practiced, but he would probably admit that malediction was the only proper treatment for the idler who bothers respectable authors by asking them to write their names in his copies of their books. For to what greater extent could one trespass upon an author's patience, energy, brown paper, string, and commodities generally? It was amusing to watch the Bibliotaph as he listened to this arraignment of his favorite pursuit. The writer of the essay admits that there may be extenuating circumstances. If the autograph collector comes bearing gifts one may smile upon his suit. If for example he accompanies his request for an autograph with 'several brace of grouse, or a salmon of noble proportions, or rare old books bound by Derome, or a service of Worcester china with the square mark,' he may hope for success. The essayist opines that such gifts 'will not be returned by a celebrity who respects himself.' 'They bless him who gives and him who takes much more than tons of manuscript poetry, and thousands of entreaties for an autograph.'

A superficial examination of the Bibliotaph's collection revealed the fact that he had either used necromancy or given many gifts. The reader may imagine some such conversation between the great collector and one of his dazzled visitors:—

'Pray, how did you come by this?'

'His lordship has always been very kind in such matters.'

'And where did you get this?'

'I am greatly indebted to the Prime Minister for his complaisance.'

'But this poet is said to abhor Americans.'

'You see that his antipathy has not prevented his writing a stanza in my copy of his most notable volume.'

'And this?'

'I have at divers times contributed the sum of five dollars to divers Fresh Air funds.'

The Bibliotaph could not be convinced that his sin of autograph collecting was not venial. When authors denied his requests, on the ground that they were intrusions, he was inclined to believe that selfishness lay at the basis of their motives. Some men are quite willing to accept great fame, but they resent being obliged to pay the penalties. They wish to sit in the fierce light which beats on an intellectual throne, but they are indignant when the passers-by stop to stare at them. They imagine that they can successfully combine the glory of honorable publicity with the perfect retirement enjoyed only by aspiring mediocrity. The Bibliotaph believed that he was a missionary to these people. He awakened in them a sense of their obligations toward their admirers. The principle involved is akin to that enunciated by a certain American philosopher, who

held that it is an act of generosity to borrow of a man once in a while; it gives that man a lively interest in the possible success or possible failure of your undertaking.

He levied autographic toll on young writers. For mature men of letters with established reputations he would do extraordinary and difficult services. A famous Englishman, not a novelist by profession, albeit he wrote one of the most successful novels of his day, earnestly desired to own if possible a complete set of all the American pirated editions of his book. The Bibliotaph set himself to this task, and collected energetically for two years. The undertaking was considerable, for many of the pirated editions were in pamphlet, and dating from twenty years back. It was almost impossible to get the earliest in a spotless condition. Quantities of trash had to be overhauled, and weeks might elapse before a perfect copy of a given edition would come to light. Books are dirty, but pamphlets are dirtier. The Bibliotaph declared that had he rendered an itemized bill for services in this matter, the largest item would have been for Turkish baths.

Here was a case in which the collector paid well for the privilege of having a signed copy of a well-loved author's novel. He begrudged no portion of his time or expenditure. If it pleased the great Englishman to have upon his shelves, in compact array and in spotless condi-

tion, these proofs of what he *did n't* earn by the publication of his books in America, well and good. The Bibliotaph was delighted that so modest a service on his part could give so apparently great a pleasure. The Englishman must have had the collecting instinct, and he must have been philosophical, since he could contemplate with equanimity these illegitimate volumes.

The conclusion of the story is this: The work of collecting the reprints was finished. The last installment reached the famous Englishman during an illness which subsequently proved fatal. They were spread upon the cover-lid of the bed, and the invalid took a great and humorous satisfaction in looking them over. Said the Bibliotaph, recounting the incident in his succinct way, 'They reached him on his death-bed, — and made him willing to go.'

The Bibliotaph was true to the traditions of the book-collecting brotherhood, in that he read but little. His knowledge of the world was fresh from life, not 'strained through books,' as Johnson said of a certain Irish painter whom he knew at Birmingham. But the Bibliotaph was a mighty devourer of book-catalogues. He got a more complete satisfaction, I used to think, in reading a catalogue than in reading any other kind of literature. To see him unwrapping the packages which his English mail had brought was to see a happy man. For in

addition to books by post, there would be bundles of sale-catalogues. Then might you behold his eyes sparkle as he spread out the tempting lists; the humorous lines about the corners of his mouth deepened, and he would take on what a little girl who watched him called his 'pussy-cat look.' Then with an indelible pencil in his huge and pudgy left fist (for the Bibliotaph was a Benjaminite), he would go through the pages, checking off the items of interest, rolling with delight in his chair as he exclaimed from time to time, 'Good books! Such good books!' Say to him that you yourself liked to read a catalogue, and his response was pretty sure to be, 'Pleasant, is n't it?' This was expressive of a high state of happiness, and was an allusion. For the Bibliotaph was once with a newly-married man, and they two met another man, who, as the conversation proceeded, disclosed the fact that he also had but recently been wed. Whereupon the first bridegroom, marveling that there could be another in the world so exalted as himself, exclaimed with sympathetic delight, 'And *you*, too, are married.' 'Yes,' said the second, 'pleasant, isn't it?' with much the same air that he would have said, 'Nice afternoon.' This was one of the incidents which made the Bibliotaph skeptical about marriage. But he adopted the phrase as a useful one with which to express the state of highest mental and spiritual exaltation.

People wondered at the extent of his knowledge of books. It was very great, but it was not incredible. If a man cannot touch pitch without being defiled, still less can he handle books without acquiring bibliographical information. I am not sure that the Bibliotaph ever heard of that professor of history who used to urge his pupils to handle books, even when they could not get time to read them. 'Go to the library, take down the volumes, turn over the leaves, read the title-pages and the tables of contents; information will stick to you' — this was the professor's advice. Information acquired in this way may not be profound, but so far as it goes it is definite and useful. For the collector it is indispensable. In this way the Bibliotaph had amassed his seemingly phenomenal knowledge of books. He had handled thousands and tens of thousands of volumes, and he never relinquished his hold upon a book until he had 'placed' it, — until he knew just what its rank was in the hierarchy of desirability.

Between a diligent reading of catalogues and an equally diligent rummaging among the collections of third and fourth rate old book-shops, the Bibliotaph had his reward. He undoubtedly bought a deal of trash, but he also lighted upon nuggets. For example, in Leask's Life of Boswell is an account of that curious little romance entitled *Dorando*. This so-called

Spanish Tale, printed for J. Wilkie at the Bible in St. Paul's Church-Yard, was the work of James Boswell. It was published anonymously in 1767, and he who would might then have bought it for 'one shilling.' It was to be 'sold also by J. Dodsley in Pall Mall, T. Davies in Russell-Street, Covent Garden, and by the Book-sellers of Scotland.' This T. Davies was the very man who introduced Boswell to Johnson. He was an actor as well as a bookseller. *Dorando* was a story with a key. Under the names of Don Stocaccio, Don Tipponi, and Don Rodomontado real people were described, and the facts of the 'famous Douglas cause' were presented to the public. The little volume was suppressed in so far as that was possible. It is rare, so rare that Boswell's latest biographer speaks of it as the 'forlorn hope of the book-hunter,' though he doubts not that copies of it are lurking in some private collection. One copy at least is lurking in the Bibliotaph's library. He bought it, not for a song to be sure, but very reasonably. The Bibliotaph declares that this book is good for but one thing, — to shake in the faces of Boswell collectors who have n't it.

The Bibliotaph had many literary heroes. Conspicuous among them were Professor Richard Porson and Benjamin Jowett, the late master of Balliol. The Bibliotaph collected everything that related to these two men, all the

books with which they had had anything to do, every newspaper clipping and magazine article which threw light upon their manners, habits, modes of thought. He especially loved to tell anecdotes of Porson. He knew many. He had an interleaved copy of J. Selby Watson's Life of Porson into which were copied a multitude of facts not to be found in that amusing biography. The Bibliotaph used to say that he would rather have known Porson than any other man of his time. He used to quote this as one of the best illustrations of Porson's wit, and one of the finest examples of the retort satiric to be found in any language. One of Porson's works was assailed by Wakefield and by Hermann, scholars to be sure, but scholars whose scholarship Porson held in contempt. Being told of their attack Porson only said that 'whatever he wrote in the future should be written in such a way that those fellows would n't be able to reach it with their fore-paws if they stood on their hind-legs to get at it!'

The Bibliotaph gave such an air of contemporaneity to his stories of the great Greek professor that it seemed at times as if they were the relations of one who had actually known Porson. So vividly did he portray the marvels of that compound of thirst and scholarship that no one had the heart to laugh when, after one of his narrations, a gentleman asked the Bibliotaph if he himself had studied under Porson.

'Not *under* him but *with* him,' said the Bibliotaph. 'He was my coeval. Porson, Richard Bentley, Joseph Scaliger, and I were all students together.'

Speaking of Jowett the Bibliotaph once said that it was wonderful to note how culture failed to counteract in an Englishman that disposition to heave stones at an American. Jowett, with his remarkable breadth of mind and temper, was quite capable of observing, with respect to a certain book, that it was American, 'yet in perfect taste.' 'This,' said the Bibliotaph, 'is as if one were to say, "The guests were Americans, but no one expectorated on the carpet."' The Bibliotaph thought that there was not so much reason for this attitude. The sins of Englishmen and Americans were identical, he believed, but the forms of their expression were different. 'Our sin is a voluble boastfulness; theirs is an irritating, unrestrainable, all-but-constantly manifested, satisfied self-consciousness. The same results are reached by different avenues. We praise ourselves; they belittle others.' Then he added with a smile: 'Thus even in these latter days are the Scriptures exemplified; the same spirit with varying manifestations.'

He was once commenting upon Jowett's classification of humorists. Jowett divided humorists 'into three categories or classes; those who are not worth reading at all; those who

are worth reading once, but once only; and those who are worth reading again and again and for ever.' This remark was made to Swinburne, who quotes it in his all too brief *Recollections of Professor Jowett.* Swinburne says that the starting-point of their discussion was the *Biglow Papers*, which 'famous and admirable work of American humour' Jowett placed in the second class. Swinburne himself thought that the *Biglow Papers* was too good for the second class and not quite good enough for the third. 'I would suggest that a fourth might be provided, to include such examples as are worth, let us say, two or three readings in a life-time.'

The Bibliotaph made a variety of comments on this, but I remember only the following; it is a reason for not including the *Biglow Papers* in Jowett's third and crowning class. 'Humor to be popular permanently must be general rather than local, and have to do with a phase of character rather than a fact of history; that is, it must deal in a great way with what is always interesting to all men. Humor that does not meet this requirement is not likely, when its novelty has worn off, to be read even occasionally save by those who enjoy it as an intellectual performance or who are making a critical study of its author.' The observation, if not profound, is at least sensible, and it illustrates very well the Bibliotaph's love of allitera-

tion and antithesis. But it is easier to remember and to report his caustic and humorous remarks.

The Country Squire had a card-catalogue of the books in his library, and he delighted to make therein entries of his past and his new purchases. But it was not always possible to find upon the shelves books that were mentioned in the catalogue. The Bibliotaph took advantage of a few instances of this sort to prod his moneyed friend. He would ask the Squire if he had such-and-such a book. The Squire would say that he had, and appeal to his catalogue in proof of it. Then would follow a search for the volume. If, as sometimes happened, no book corresponding to the entry could be found, the Bibliotaph would be satirical and remark: —

'I 'll tell you what you ought to name your catalogue.'

'What?'

'Great expectations!'

Another time he said, 'This is not a list of your books, this is a list of the things that you intend to buy;' or he would suggest that the Squire would do well to christen his catalogue *Vaulting Ambition.* Perhaps the variation might take this form. After a fruitless search for some book, which upon the testimony of the catalogue was certainly in the collection, the Bibliotaph would observe, 'This catalogue

might not inappropriately be spoken of as the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' Another time the Bibliotaph said to the Squire, calling to mind the well-known dictum as to the indispensableness of certain books, 'Between what one sees on your shelves and what one reads in your card-catalogue one would have reason to believe that you were a gentleman.'

Once the Bibliotaph said to me in the presence of the Squire: 'I think that our individual relation to books might be expressed in this way. You read books but you don't buy them. I buy books but I don't read them. The Squire neither reads them nor buys them, — only card-catalogues them!'

To all this the Squire had a reply which was worldly, emphatic, and adequate, but the object of this study is not to exhibit the virtues of the Squire's speech, witty though it was.

One of the Bibliotaph's friends began without sufficient provocation to write verse. The Bibliotaph thought that if the matter were taken promptly in hand the man could be saved. Accordingly, when next he gave this friend a book he wrote upon a fly-leaf: 'To a Poet who is nothing if not original — and who is not original!' And the injured rhymester exclaimed when he read the inscription: 'You deface every book you give me.'

He could pay a compliment, as when he was

dining with a married pair who were thought to be not yet disenchanted albeit in the tenth year of their married life. The lady was speaking to the Bibliotaph, but in the eagerness of conversation addressed him by her husband's first name. Whereupon he turned to the husband and said: 'Your wife implies that I am a repository of grace and a bundle of virtues, and calls me by your name.'

He once sent this same lady, apropos of the return of the shirt-waist season, a dozen neckties. In the box was his card with these words penciled upon it: 'A contribution to the man-made dress of a God-made woman.'

The Squire had great skill in imitating the cries of various domestic fowl, as well as dogs, cats, and children. Once, in a moment of social relaxation, he was giving an exhibition of his power to the vast amusement of his guests. When he had finished, the Bibliotaph said: 'The theory of Henry Ward Beecher that every man has something of the animal in him is superabundantly exemplified in *your* case. You, sir, have got the whole Ark.'

There was a quaint humor in his most commonplace remarks. Of all the fruits of the earth he loved most a watermelon. And when a fellow-traveler remarked, 'That watermelon which we had at dinner was bad,' the Bibliotaph instantly replied: 'There is no such thing as a *bad* watermelon. There are watermelons, and *better* watermelons.'

I expressed astonishment on learning that he stood six feet in his shoes. He replied: 'People are so preoccupied in the consideration of my thickness that they don't have time to observe my height.'

Again, when he was walking through a private park which contained numerous monstrosities in the shape of painted metal deer on pedestals, pursued (also on pedestals) by hunters and dogs, the Bibliotaph pointed to one of the dogs and said, 'Cave cast-iron canem!'

He once accompanied a party of friends and acquaintances to the summit of Mt. Tom. The ascent is made in these days by a very remarkable inclined plane. After looking at the extensive and exquisite view, the Bibliotaph fell to examining his return coupon, which read, 'Good for one Trip Down.' Then he said: 'Let us hope that in a post-terrestrial experience our tickets will not read in this way.'

He was once ascending in the unusually commodious and luxurious elevator of a new ten-story hotel and remarked to his companion: 'If we can't be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, we can at least start in that direction under not dissimilar conditions.' He also said that the advantage of stopping at this particular hotel was that you were able to get as far as possible from the city in which it was located.

He studied the dictionary with great dili-

gence and was unusually accurate in his pronunciation. He took an amused satisfaction in pronouncing exactly certain words which in common talk had shifted phonetically from their moorings. This led a gentleman who was intimate with the Bibliotaph to say to him, 'Why, if I were to pronounce that word among my kinsfolk as you do they'd think I was crazy.' 'What you mean,' said the Bibliotaph, 'is, that they would look upon it in the light of supererogatory supplementary evidence.'

He himself indulged overmuch in alliteration, but it was with humorous intent; and critics forgave it in him when they would have reprehended it in another. He had no notion that it was fine. Taken, however, in connection with his emphatic manner and sonorous voice he produced a decided and original effect. Meeting the Squire's wife after a considerable interval, I asked whether her husband had been behaving well. She replied 'As usual.' Whereupon the Bibliotaph said, 'You mean that his conduct in these days is characterized by a plethora of intention and a paucity of performance.'

He objected to enlarging the boundaries of words until they stood for too many things. Let a word be kept so far as was reasonable to its earlier and authorized meaning. Speaking of the word 'symposium,' which has been stretched to mean a collection of short articles on a given subject, the Bibliotaph said that he

could fancy a honey-bee which had been feasting on pumice until it was unable to make the line characteristic of its kind, explaining to its queen that it had been to a symposium; but that he doubted if we ought to allow any other meaning.

The Bibliotaph got much amusement from what he insisted were the ill-concealed anxieties of his friend the actor on the subject of a future state. 'He has acquired,' said the Bibliotaph, 'both a pathetic and a prophetic interest in that place which begins as heaven does, but stops off monosyllabically.'

The two men were one day discussing the question of the permanency of fame, how ephemeral for example was that reputation which depended upon the living presence of the artist to make good its claim; how an actor, an orator, a singer, was bound to enjoy his glory while it lasted, since at the instant of his death all tangible evidence of greatness disappeared; he could not be proven great to one who had never seen and heard him. Having reached this point in his philosophizing the Bibliotaph's player-friend became sentimental and quoted a great comedian to the effect that 'a dead actor was a mighty useless thing.' 'Certainly,' said the Bibliotaph, 'having exhausted the life that now is, and having no hope of the life that is to come.'

Sometimes it pleased the Bibliotaph to main-

tain that his friend of the footlights would be in the future state a mere homeless wanderer, having neither positive satisfaction nor positive discomfort. For the actor was wont to insist that even if there were an orthodox heaven its moral opposite were the desirable locality; all the clever and interesting fellows would be down below. 'Except yourself,' said the Bibliotaph. 'You, sir, will be eliminated by your own reasoning. You will be denied heaven because you are not good, and hell because you are not great.'

On the whole it pleased the Bibliotaph to maintain that his friend's course was downward, and that the sooner he reconciled himself to his undoubted fate the better. 'Why speculate upon it?' he said paternally to the actor, 'your prospective comparisons will one day yield to reminiscent contrasts.'

The actor was convinced that the Bibliotaph's own past life needed looking into, and he declared that when he got a chance he was going to examine the great records. To which the Bibliotaph promptly responded: 'The books of the recording angel will undoubtedly be open to your inspection if you can get an hour off to come up. The probability is that you will be overworked.'

The Bibliotaph never lost an opportunity for teasing. He arrived late one evening at the house of a friend where he was always heartily

welcome, and before answering the chorus of greetings, proceeded to kiss the lady of the mansion, a queenly and handsome woman. Being asked why he — who was a large man and very shy with respect to women, as large men always are — should have done this thing, he answered that the kiss had been sent by a common friend and that he had delivered it at once, 'for if there was anything he prided himself upon it was a courageous discharge of an unpleasant duty.'

Once when he had been narrating this incident he was asked what reply the lady had made to so uncourteous a speech. 'I don't remember,' said the Bibliotaph, 'it was long ago; but my opinion is that she would have been justified in denominating me by a monosyllable beginning with the initial letter of the alphabet and followed by successive sibilants.'

One of the Bibliotaph's fellow book-hunters owned a chair said to have been given by Sir Edwin Landseer to Sir Walter Scott. The chair was interesting to behold, but the Bibliotaph after attempting to sit in it immediately got up and declared that it was not a genuine relic: 'Sir Edwin had reason to be grateful to rather than indignant at Sir Walter Scott.'

He said of a highly critical person that if that man were to become a minister he would probably announce as the subject of his first sermon: 'The conditions that God must meet

in order to be acceptable to me.' He said of a poor orator who had copyrighted one of his most indifferent speeches, that the man 'positively suffered from an excess of caution.' He remarked once that the great trouble with a certain lady was 'she labored under the delusion that she enjoyed occasional seasons of sanity.'

The *nil admirari* attitude was one which he never affected, and he had a contempt for men who denied to the great in literature and art that praise which was their due. This led him to say apropos of an obscure critic who had assailed one of the poetical masters: 'When the Lord makes a man a fool he injures him; but when He so constitutes him that the man is never happy unless he is making that fact public, He insults him.'

He enjoyed speculating on the subject of marriage, especially in the presence of those friends who unlike himself knew something about it empirically. He delighted to tell his lady acquaintances that their husbands would undoubtedly marry a second time if they had the chance. It was inevitable. A man whose experience has been fortunate is bound to marry again, because he is like the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo. A man who has been unhappily married marries again because like an unfortunate gamester he has reached the time when his luck has got to

change. The Bibliotaph then added with a smile: 'I have the idea that many men who marry a second time do in effect what is often done by unsuccessful gamblers at Monte Carlo; they go out and commit suicide.'

The Bibliotaph played but few games. There was one, however, in which he was skillful. I blush to speak of it in these days of much muscular activity. What have golfers, and tennis-players, and makers of century runs to do with croquet? Yet there was a time when croquet was spoken of as 'the coming game;' and had not Clintock's friend Jennings written an epic poem upon it in twelve books, which poem he offered to lend to a certain brilliant young lady? But Gwendolen despised boys and cared even less for their poetry than for themselves.

At the house of the Country Squire the Bibliotaph was able to gratify his passion for croquet, and verily he was a master. He made a grotesque figure upon the court, with his big frame which must stoop mightily to take account of balls and short-handled mallets, with his agile manner, his uncovered head shaggy with its barbaric profusion of hair (whereby some one was led to nickname him Bibliotaph Indetonsus), with the scanty black alpaca coat in which he invariably played — a coat so short in the sleeves and so brief in the skirt that the figure cut by the wearer might almost have passed for that of Mynheer Ten Broek of many-

trowsered memory. But it was vastly more amusing to watch him than to play with him. He had a devil 'most undoubted.' Only with the help of black art and by mortgaging one's soul would it have been possible to accomplish some of the things which he accomplished. For the materials of croquet are so imperfect at best that chance is an influential element. I 've seen tennis-players in the intervals of *their* game watch the Bibliotaph with that superior smile suggestive of contempt for the puerility of his favorite sport. They might even condescend to take a mallet for a while to amuse *him;* but presently discomfited they would retire to a game less capricious than croquet and one in which there was reasonable hope that a given cause would produce its wonted effect.

The Bibliotaph played strictly for the purpose of winning, and took savage joy in his conquests. In playing with him one had to do two men's work; one must play, and then one must summon such philosophy as one might to suffer continuous defeat, and such wit as one possessed to beat back a steady onslaught of daring and witty criticisms. 'I play like a fool,' said a despairing opponent after fruitless effort to win a just share of the games. 'We all have our moments of unconsciousness,' purred the Bibliotaph blandly in response. This same despairing opponent, who was an

expert in everything he played, said that there was but one solace after croquet with the Bibliotaph; he would go home and read Hazlitt's essay on the Indian Jugglers.

Here ends the account of the Bibliotaph. From these inadequate notes it is possible to get some little idea of his habits and conversation. The library is said to be still growing. Packages of books come mysteriously from the corners of the earth and make their way to that remote and almost inaccessible village where the great collector hides his treasures. No one has ever penetrated that region, and no one, so far as I am aware, has ever seen the treasures. The books lie entombed, as it were, awaiting such day of resurrection as their owner shall appoint them. The day is likely to be long delayed. Of the collector's whereabouts now no one of his friends dares to speak positively; for at the time when knowledge of him was most exact THE BIBLIOTAPH was like a newly-discovered comet, — his course was problematical.

THOMAS HARDY

I

'THE reason why so few good books are written is that so few people that can write know anything.' So said a man who, during a busy career, found time to add several fine volumes to the scanty number of good books. And in a vivacious paragraph which follows this initial sentence he humorously anathematizes the literary life. He shows convincingly that 'secluded habits do not tend to eloquence.' He says that the 'indifferent apathy' so common among studious persons is by no means favorable to liveliness of narration. He proves that men who will not live cannot write; that people who shut themselves up in libraries have dry brains. He avows his confidence in the 'original way of writing books,' the way of the first author, who must have looked at things for himself, 'since there were no books for him to copy from;' and he challenges the reader to prove that this original way is not the best way. 'Where,' he asks, 'are the amusing books from voracious students and habitual writers?'

This startling arraignment of authors has been made by other men than Walter Bagehot. Hazlitt in his essay on the 'Ignorance of the Learned' teaches much the same doctrine. Its general truth is indisputable, though Bagehot himself makes exception in favor of Sir Walter Scott. But the two famous critics are united in their conviction that learned people are generally dull, and that books which are the work of habitual writers are not amusing.

There are as a matter of course more exceptions than one. Thomas Hardy is a distinguished exception. Thomas Hardy is an 'habitual writer,' but he is always amusing. The following paragraphs are intended to emphasize certain causes of this quality in his work, the quality by virtue of which he chains the attention and proves himself the most readable novelist now living. That he does attract and hold is clear to any one who has tried no more than a half-dozen pages from one of his best stories. He has the fatal habit of being interesting, — fatal because it robs you who read him of time which you might else have devoted to 'improving' literature, such as history, political economy, or light science. He destroys your peace of mind by compelling your sympathies in behalf of people who never existed. He undermines your will power and makes you his slave. You declare that you will read but one more chapter and you weakly consent to

make it two chapters. As a special indulgence you spoil a working day in order to learn about the *Return of the Native*, perhaps agreeing with a supposititious 'better self' that you will waste no more time on novels for the next six months. But you are of ascetic fibre indeed if you do not follow up the book with a reading of *The Woodlanders* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

There is a reason for this. If the practiced writer often fails to make a good book because he knows nothing, Mr. Hardy must succeed in large part because he knows so much. The more one reads him the more is one impressed with the extent of his knowledge. He has an intimate acquaintance with an immense number of interesting things.

He knows men and women — if not all sorts and all conditions, at least a great many varieties of the human animal. Moreover, his men are men and his women are women. He does not use them as figures to accentuate a landscape, or as ventriloquist's puppets to draw away attention from the fact that he himself is doing all the talking. His people have individuality, power of speech, power of motion. He does not tell you that such a one is clever or witty; the character which he has created does that for himself by doing clever things and making witty remarks. In an excellent story by a celebrated modern master there is a young lady who is declared to be clever and brilliant.

Out of forty or fifty observations which she makes, the most extraordinary concerns her father; she says, 'Is n't dear papa delightful?' At another time she inquires whether another gentleman is not also delightful. Hardy's resources are not so meagre as this. When his people talk we listen, — we do not endure.

He knows other things besides men and women. He knows the soil, the trees, the sky, the sunsets, the infinite variations of the landscape under cloud and sunshine. He knows horses, sheep, cows, dogs, cats. He understands the interpretation of sounds, — a detail which few novelists comprehend or treat with accuracy; the pages of his books ring with the noises of house, street, and country. Moreover there is nothing conventional in his transcript of facts. There is no evidence that he has been in the least degree influenced by other men's minds. He takes the raw stuff of which novels are made and moulds it as he will. He has an absolutely fresh eye, as painters sometimes say. He looks on life as if he were the first literary man, 'and none had ever lived before him.' Paraphrasing Ruskin, one may say of Hardy that in place of studying the old masters he has studied what the old masters studied. But his point of view is his own. His pages are not reminiscent of other pages. He never makes you think of something you have read, but invariably of something you have

seen or would like to see. He is an original writer, which means that he takes his material at first hand and eschews documents. There is considerable evidence that he has read books, but there is no reason for supposing that books have damaged him.

Dr. Farmer proved that Shakespeare had no 'learning.' One might perhaps demonstrate that Thomas Hardy is equally fortunate. In that case he and Shakespeare may felicitate one another. Though when we remember that in our day it is hardly possible to avoid a tincture of scholarship, we may be doing the fairer thing by these two men if we say that the one had small Greek and the other has adroitly concealed the measure of Greek, whether great or small, which is in his possession. To put the matter in another form, though Hardy may have drunk in large quantity 'the spirit breathed from dead men to their kind,' he has not allowed his potations to intoxicate him.

This paragraph is not likely to be misinterpreted unless by some honest soul who has yet to learn that 'literature is not sworn testimony.' Therefore it may be well to add that Mr. Hardy undoubtedly owns a collection of books, and has upon his shelves dictionaries and encyclopedias, together with a decent representation of those works which people call 'standard.' But it is of importance to remember this: That while he may be a well-read man, as the phrase

goes, he is not and never has been of that class which Emerson describes with pale sarcasm as 'meek young men in libraries.' It is clear that Hardy has not 'weakened his eyesight over books,' and it is equally clear that he has 'sharpened his eyesight on men and women.' Let us consider a few of his virtues.

II

In the first place he tells a good story. No extravagant praise is due him for this; it is his business, his trade. He ought to do it, and therefore he does it. The 'first morality' of a novelist is to be able to tell a story, as the first morality of a painter is to be able to handle his brush skillfully and make it do his brain's intending. After all, telling stories in an admirable fashion is rather a familiar accomplishment nowadays. Many men, many women are able to make stories of considerable ingenuity as to plot, and of thrilling interest in the unrolling of a scheme of events. Numberless writers are shrewd and clever in constructing their 'fable,' but they are unable to do much beyond this. Walter Besant writes good stories; Robert Buchanan writes good stories; Grant Allen and David Christie Murray are acceptable to many readers. But unless I mistake greatly and do these men an injustice I should be sorry to do them, their ability ceases just at this point. They tell good stories and do nothing

else. They write books and do not make literature. They are authors by their own will and not by grace of God. It may be said of them as Augustine Birrell said of Professor Freeman and the Bishop of Chester, that they are horny-handed sons of toil and worthy of their wage. But one would like to say a little more. Granting that this is praise, it is so faint as to be almost inaudible. If Hardy only wrote good stories he would be merely doing his duty, and therefore accounted an unprofitable servant. But he does much besides.

He fulfills one great function of the literary artist, which is to mediate between nature and the reading public. Such a man is an eye specialist. Through his amiable offices people who have hitherto been blind are put into condition to see. Near-sighted persons have spectacles fitted to them — which they generally refuse to wear, not caring for literature which clears the mental vision.

Hardy opens the eyes of the reader to the charm, the beauty, the mystery to be found in common life and in every-day objects. So alert and forceful an intelligence rarely applies its energy to fiction. The result is that he makes an almost hopelessly high standard. The exceptional man who comes after him may be a rival, but the majority of writing gentlemen can do little more than enviously admire. He seems to have established for himself such a

rule as this, that he will write no page which shall not be interesting. He pours out the treasures of his observation in every chapter. He sees everything, feels everything, sympathizes with everything. To be sure he has an unusually rich field for work. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is an account of the discovery of the remains of an old Roman soldier. One would expect Hardy to make something graphic of the episode. And so he does. You can almost see the warrior as he lies there 'in an oval scoop in the chalk, like a chicken in its shell; his knees drawn up to his chest; his spear against his arm; an urn at his knees, a jar at his throat, a bottle at his mouth; and mystified conjecture pouring down upon him from the eyes of Casterbridge street-boys and men.'

The real virtue in this bit of description lies in the few words expressive of the mental attitude of the onlookers. And it is a nice distinction which Hardy makes when he says that 'imaginative inhabitants who would have felt an unpleasantness at the discovery of a comparatively modern skeleton in their gardens were quite unmoved by these hoary shapes. They had lived so long ago, their hopes and motives were so widely removed from ours, that between them and the living there seemed to stretch a gulf too wide for even a spirit to pass.'

He takes note of that language which, though not articulate, is in common use among yeomen, dairymen, farmers, and the townsfolk of his little world. It is a language superimposed upon the ordinary language. 'To express satisfaction the Casterbridge market-man added to his utterance a broadening of the cheeks, a crevicing of the eyes, a throwing back of the shoulders.' 'If he wondered . . . you knew it from perceiving the inside of his crimson mouth and the target-like circling of his eyes.' The language of deliberation expressed itself in the form of 'sundry attacks on the moss of adjoining walls with the end of his stick' or a 'change of his hat from the horizontal to the less so.'

The novel called *The Woodlanders* is filled with notable illustrations of an interest in minute things. The facts are introduced unobtrusively and no great emphasis is laid upon them. But they cling to the memory. Giles Winterbourne, a chief character in this story, 'had a marvelous power in making trees grow. Although he would seem to shovel in the earth quite carelessly there was a sort of sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beach that he was operating on; so that the roots took hold of the soil in a few days.' When any of the journeymen planted, one quarter of the trees died away. There is a graphic little scene where Winterbourne plants and Marty South holds the trees for him. 'Winter-

bourne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjurer's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of caress under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper direction for growth.' Marty declared that the trees began to 'sigh' as soon as they were put upright, 'though when they are lying down they don't sigh at all.' Winterbourne had never noticed it. 'She erected one of the young pines into its hole, and held up her finger; the soft musical breathing instantly set in, which was not to cease night or day till the grown tree should be felled — probably long after the two planters had been felled themselves.'

Later on in the story there is a description of this same Giles Winterbourne returning with his horses and his cider apparatus from a neighboring village. 'He looked and smelt like autumn's very brother, his face being sunburnt to wheat color, his eyes blue as corn flowers, his sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit stains, his hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips, and everywhere about him that atmosphere of cider which at its first return each season has such an indescribable fascination for those who have been born and bred among the orchards.'

Hardy throws off little sketches of this sort with an air of unconsciousness which is fascinating. It may be a sunset, or it may be only

a flake of snow falling upon a young girl's hair, or the light from lanterns penetrating the shutters and flickering over the ceiling of a room in the early winter morning, — no matter what the circumstance or happening is, it is caught in the act, photographed in permanent colors, made indelible and beautiful.

Hardy's art is tyrannical. It compels one to be interested in that which delights him. It imposes its own standards. There is a rude strength about the man which readers endure because they are not unwilling to be slaves to genius. You may dislike sheep, and care but little for the poetical aspect of cows, if indeed you are not inclined to question the existence of poetry in cows; but if you read *Far from the Madding Crowd* you can never again pass a flock of sheep without being conscious of a multitude of new thoughts, new images, new matters for comparison. All that dormant section of your soul which for years was in a comatose condition on the subject of sheep is suddenly and broadly awake. Read *Tess* and at once cows and a dairy have a new meaning to you. They are a conspicuous part of the setting of that stage upon which poor Tess Durbeyfield's life drama was played.

But Hardy does not flaunt his knowledge in his reader's face. These things are distinctly means to an end, not ends in themselves. He has no theory to advance about keeping bees

or making cider. He has taken no little journeys in the world. On the contrary, where he has traveled at all, he has traveled extensively. He is like a tourist who has been so many times abroad that his allusions are naturally and unaffectedly made. But the man just back from a first trip on the continent has astonishment stamped upon his face, and he speaks of Paris and of the Alps as if he had discovered both. Zola is one of those practitioners who, big with recently acquired knowledge, appear to labor under the idea that the chief end of a novel is to convey miscellaneous information. This is probably a mistake. Novels are not handbooks on floriculture, banking, railways, or the management of department stores. One may make a parade of minute details and endlessly wearisome learning and gain a certain credit thereby; but what if the details and the learning are chiefly of value in a dictionary of sciences and commerce? Wisdom of this sort is to be sparingly used in a work of art.

In these matters I cannot but feel that Hardy has a reticence so commendable that praise of it is superfluous and impertinent. After all, men and women are better than sheep and cows, and had he been more explicit, he would have tempted one to inquire whether he proposed making a story or a volume which might bear the title *The Wessex Farmer's Own Hand-Book*, and containing wise advice as to pigs, poultry,

and the useful art of making two heads of cabbage grow where only one had grown before.

III

Among the most engaging qualities of this writer is humor. Hardy is a humorous man himself and entirely appreciative of the humor that is in others. According to a distinguished philosopher, wit and humor produce love. Hardy must then be in daily receipt of large measures of this 'improving passion' from his innumerable readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

His humor manifests itself in a variety of ways; by the use of witty epithet; by ingenious description of a thing which is not strikingly laughable in itself, but which becomes so from the closeness of his rendering; by a leisurely and ample account of a character with humorous traits, — traits which are brought artistically into prominence as an actor heightens the complexion in stage make-up; and finally by his lively reproductions of the talk of village and country people, — a class of society whose everyday speech has only to be heard to be enjoyed. I do not pretend that the sources of Hardy's humor are exhausted in this analysis, but the majority of illustrations can be assigned to some one of these divisions.

He is usually thought to be at his best in descriptions of farmers, village mechanics, labor-

ers, dairymen, men who kill pigs, tend sheep, furze-cutters, masons, hostlers, loafers who do nothing in particular, and while thus occupied rail on Lady Fortune in good set terms. Certainly he paints these people with affectionate fidelity. Their virile, racy talk delights him. His reproductions of that talk are often intensely realistic. Nearly every book has its chorus of human grotesques whose mere names are a source of mirth. William Worm, Grandfer Cantle, 'Corp'el' Tullidge, Christopher Coney, John Upjohn, Robert Creedle, Martin Cannister, Haymoss Fry, Robert Lickpan, and Sammy Blore, — men so denominated should stand for comic things, and these men do. William Worm, for example, was deaf. His deafness took an unusual form; he heard fish frying in his head, and he was not reticent upon the subject of his infirmity. He usually described himself by the epithet 'wambling,' and protested that he would never pay the Lord for his making, — a degree of self-knowledge which many have arrived at but few have the courage to confess. He was once observed in the act of making himself 'passing civil and friendly by overspreading his face with a large smile that seemed to have no connection with the humor he was in.' Sympathy because of his deafness elicited this response: 'Ay, I assure you that frying o' fish is going on for nights and days. And, you know, sometimes 'tis n't

only fish, but rashers o' bacon and inions. Ay, I can hear the fat pop and fizz as nateral as life.'

He was questioned as to what means of cure he had tried.

'Oh, ay bless ye, I 've tried everything. Ay, Providence is a merciful man, and I have hoped he 'd have found it out by this time, living so many years in a parson's family, too, as I have; but 'a don't seem to relieve me. Ay, I be a poor wambling man, and life 's a mint o' trouble.'

One knows not which to admire the more, the appetizing realism in William Worm's account of his infirmity, or the primitive state of his theological views which allowed him to look for special divine favor by virtue of the ecclesiastical conspicuousness of his late residence.

Hardy must have heard, with comfort in the thought of its literary possibilities, the following dialogue on the cleverness of women. It occurs in the last chapter of *The Woodlanders*. A man who is always spoken of as the 'hollow-turner,' a phrase obviously descriptive of his line of business, which related to wooden bowls, spigots, cheese-vats, and funnels, talks with John Upjohn.

'What women do know nowadays!' he says. 'You can't deceive 'em as you could in my time.'

'What they knowed then was not small,' said

John Upjohn. 'Always a good deal more than the men! Why, when I went courting my wife that is now, the skillfulness that she would show in keeping me on her pretty side as she walked was beyond all belief. Perhaps you've noticed that she's got a pretty side to her face as well as a plain one?'

"I can't say I've noticed it particular much,' said the hollow-turner blandly.

'Well,' continued Upjohn, not disconcerted, 'she has. All women under the sun be prettier one side than t' other. And, as I was saying, the pains she would take to make me walk on the pretty side were unending. I warrent that whether we were going with the sun or against the sun, uphill or downhill, in wind or in lewth, that wart of hers was always toward the hedge, and that dimple toward me. There was I too simple to see her wheelings and turnings; and she so artful though two years younger, that she could lead me with a cotton thread like a blind ham; . . . no, I don't think the women have got cleverer, for they was never otherwise.'

IV

These men have sap and juice in their talk. When they think they think clearly. When they speak they express themselves with an energy and directness which mortify the thin speech of conventional persons. Here is Far-

frae, the young Scotchman, in the tap-room of the Three Mariners Inn of Casterbridge, singing of his ain contree with a pathos quite unknown in that part of the world. The worthies who frequent the place are deeply moved. 'Danged if our country down here is worth singing about like that,' says Billy Wills, the glazier, — while the literal Christopher Coney inquires, 'What did ye come away from yer own country for, young maister, if ye be so wownded about it?' Then it occurs to him that it was n't worth Farfrae's while to leave the fair face and the home of which he had been singing to come among such as they. 'We be bruckle folk here — the best o' us hardly honest sometimes, what with hard winters, and so many mouths to fill, and God-a'mighty sending his little taties so terrible small to fill 'em with. We don't think about flowers and fair faces, not we — except in the shape of cauliflowers and pigs' chaps.'

I should like to see the man who sat to Artist Hardy for the portrait of Corporal Tullidge in *The Trumpet-Major*. This worthy, who was deaf and talked in an uncompromisingly loud voice, had been struck in the head by a piece of shell at Valenciennes in '93. His left arm had been smashed. Time and Nature had done what they could, and under their beneficent influences the arm had become a sort of anatomical rattle-box. People interested in Corp'el

Tullidge were allowed to see his head and hear his arm. The corp'el gave these private views at any time, and was quite willing to show off, though the exhibition was apt to bore him a little. His fellows displayed him much as one would a 'freak' in a dime museum.

'You have got a silver plate let into yer head, have n't ye, corp'el?' said Anthony Cripplestraw. 'I have heard that the way they mortised yer skull was a beautiful piece of workmanship. Perhaps the young woman would like to see the place.'

The young woman was Anne Garland, the sweet heroine of the story; and Anne did n't want to see the silver plate, the thought of which made her almost faint. Nor could she be tempted by being told that one could n't see such a 'wownd' every day. Then Cripplestraw, earnest to please her, suggested that Tullidge rattle his arm, which Tullidge did, to Anne's great distress.

'Oh, it don't hurt him, bless ye. Do it, corp'el?' said Cripplestraw.

'Not a bit,' said the corporal, still working his arm with great energy. There was, however, a perfunctoriness in his manner 'as if the glory of exhibition had lost somewhat of its novelty, though he was still willing to oblige.' Anne resisted all entreaties to convince herself by feeling of the corporal's arm that the bones were 'as loose as a bag of ninepins,' and dis-

played an anxiety to escape. Whereupon the corporal, 'with a sense that his time was getting wasted,' inquired: 'Do she want to see or hear any more, or don't she?'

This is but a single detail in the account of a party which Miller Loveday gave to soldier guests in honor of his son John, — a description the sustained vivacity of which can only be appreciated through a reading of those brilliant early chapters of the story.

Half the mirth that is in these men comes from the frankness with which they confess their actual thoughts. Ask a man of average morals and average attainments why he does n't go to church. You won't know any better after he has given you his answer. Ask Nat Chapman, of the novel entitled *Two on a Tower*, and you will not be troubled with ambiguities. He does n't like to go because Mr. Torkingham's sermons make him think of soul-saving and other bewildering and uncomfortable topics. So when the son of Torkingham's predecessor asks Nat how it goes with him, that tiller of the soil answers promptly: 'Pa'son Tarkenham do tease a feller's conscience that much, that church is no holler-day at all to the limbs, as it was in yer reverent father's time!'

The unswerving honesty with which they assign utilitarian motives for a particular line of conduct is delightful. Three men discuss a wedding, which took place not at the home of

the bride but in a neighboring parish, and was therefore very private. The first does n't blame the new married pair, because 'a wedding at home means five and six handed reels by the hour, and they do a man's legs no good when he 's over forty.' A second corroborates the remark and says: 'True. Once at the woman's house you can hardly say nay to being one in a jig, knowing all the time that you be expected to make yourself worth your victuals.'

The third puts the whole matter beyond the need of further discussion by adding: 'For my part, I like a good hearty funeral as well as anything. You 've as splendid victuals and drink as at other parties, and even better. And it don't wear your legs to stumps in talking over a poor fellow's ways as it do to stand up in hornpipes.'

Beings who talk like this know their minds, — a rather unwonted circumstance among the sons of men, — and knowing them, they do the next most natural thing in the world, which is to speak the minds they have.

There is yet another phase of Hardy's humor to be noted: that humor, sometimes defiant, sometimes philosophic, which concerns death and its accompaniments. It cannot be thought morbid. Hardy is too fond of Nature ever to degenerate into mere morbidity. He has lived much in the open air, which always corrects a tendency to 'vapors.' He takes little pleasure

in the gruesome, a statement in support of which one may cite all his works up to 1892, the date of the appearance of *Tess*. This paper includes no comment in detail upon the later books; but so far as *Tess* is concerned it would be critical folly to speak of it as morbid. It is sad, it is terrible, as *Lear* is terrible, or as any one of the great tragedies, written by men we call 'masters,' is terrible. *Jude* is psychologically gruesome, no doubt; but not absolutely indefensible. Even if it were as black a book as some critics have painted it, the general truth of the statement as to the healthfulness of Hardy's work would not be impaired. This work judged as a whole is sound and invigorating. He cannot be accused of over-fondness for charnel-houses or ghosts. He does not discourse of graves and vaults in order to arouse that terror which the thought of death inspires. It is not for the purpose of making the reader uncomfortable. If the grave interests him, it is because of the reflections awakened. 'Man, proud man,' needs that jog to his memory which the pomp of interments and aspect of tombstones give. Hardy has keen perception of that humor which glows in the presence of death and on the edge of the grave. The living have such a tremendous advantage over the dead, that they can neither help feeling it nor avoid a display of the feeling. When the lion is buried the dogs crack jokes at the

funeral. They do it in a subdued manner, no doubt, and with a sense of proprieties, but nevertheless they do it. Their immense superiority is never so apparent as at just this moment.

This humor, which one notes in Hardy, is akin to the humor of the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, but not so grim. I have heard a country undertaker describe the details of the least attractive branch of his uncomfortable business with a pride and self-satisfaction that would have been farcical had not the subject been so depressing. This would have been matter for Hardy's pen. There are few scenes in his books more telling than that which shows the operations in the family vault of the Luxellians, when John Smith, Martin Cannister, and old Simeon prepare the place for Lady Luxellian's coffin. It seems hardly wise to pronounce this episode as good as the grave-diggers' scene in *Hamlet;* that would shock some one and gain for the writer the reputation of being enthusiastic rather than critical. But I profess that I enjoy the talk of old Simeon and Martin Cannister quite as much as the talk of the first and second grave-diggers.

Simeon, the shriveled mason, was 'a marvelously old man, whose skin seemed so much too large for his body that it would not stay in position.' He talked of the various great dead whose coffins filled the family vault. Here was the stately and irascible Lord George: —

'Ah, poor Lord George,' said the mason, looking contemplatively at the huge coffin; 'he and I were as bitter enemies once as any could be when one is a lord and t' other only a mortal man. Poor fellow! He'd clap his hand upon my shoulder and cuss me as familiar and neighborly as if he'd been a common chap. Ay, 'a cussed me up hill and 'a cussed me down; and then 'a would rave out again and the goold clamps of his fine new teeth would glisten in the sun like fetters of brass, while I, being a small man and poor, was fain to say nothing at all. Such a strappen fine gentleman as he was too! Yes, I rather liken en sometimes. But once now and then, when I looked at his towering height, I'd think in my inside, "What a weight you'll be, my lord, for our arms to lower under the inside of Endelstow church some day!"'

'And was he?' inquired a young laborer.

'He was. He was five hundred weight if 'a were a pound. What with his lead, and his oak, and his handles, and his one thing and t' other' — here the ancient man slapped his hand upon the cover with a force that caused a rattle among the bones inside — 'he half broke my back when I took his feet to lower en down the steps there. "Ah," saith I to John there — did n't I, John? — "that ever one man's glory should be such a weight upon another man!" But there, I liked my Lord George sometimes.'

It may be observed that as Hardy grows older his humor becomes more subtle or quite dies away, as if serious matters pressed upon his mind, and there was no time for being jocular. Some day, perhaps, if he should rise to the dignity of an English classic, this will be spoken of as his third period, and critics will be wise in the elucidation thereof. But just at present this third period is characterized by the terms 'pessimistic' and 'unhealthy.'

That he is a pessimist in the colloquial sense admits of little question. Nor is it surprising; it is rather difficult not to be. Not a few persons are pessimists and won't tell. They preserve a fair exterior, but secretly hold that all flesh is grass. Some people escape the disease by virtue of much philosophy or much religion or much work. Many who have not taken up permanent residence beneath the roof of Schopenhauer or Von Hartmann are occasional guests. Then there is that great mass of pessimism which is the result, not of thought, but of mere discomfort, physical and super-physical. One may have attacks of pessimism from a variety of small causes. A bad stomach will produce it. Financial difficulties will produce it. The light-minded get it from changes in the weather.

That note of melancholy which we detect in many of Hardy's novels is as it should be. For no man can apprehend life aright and still look

upon it as a carnival. He may attain serenity in respect to it, but he can never be jaunty and flippant. He can never slap life upon the back and call it by familiar names. He may hold that the world is indisputably growing better, but he will need to admit that the world is having a hard time in so doing.

Hardy would be sure of a reputation for pessimism in some quarters if only because of his attitude, or what people think is his attitude, toward marriage. He has devoted many pages and not a little thought to the problems of the relations between men and women. He is considerably interested in questions of 'matrimonial divergence.' He recognizes that most obvious of all obvious truths, that marriage is not always a success; nay, more than this, that it is often a makeshift, an apology, a pretense. But he professes to undertake nothing beyond a statement of the facts. It rests with the public to lay his statement beside their experience and observation, and thus take measure of the fidelity of his art.

He notes the variety of motives by which people are actuated in the choice of husbands and wives. In the novel called *The Woodlanders*, Grace Melbury, the daughter of a rich though humbly-born yeoman, has unusual opportunities for a girl of her class, and is educated to a point of physical and intellectual daintiness which make her seem superior to

her home environment. Her father has hoped that she will marry her rustic lover, Giles Winterbourne, who, by the way, is a man in every fibre of his being. Grace is quite unspoiled by her life at a fashionable boarding school, but after her return her father feels (and Hardy makes the reader feel) that in marrying Giles she will sacrifice herself. She marries Dr. Fitzspiers, a brilliant young physician, recently come into the neighborhood, and in so doing she chooses for the worse. The character of Dr. Fitzspiers is summarized in a statement he once made (presumably to a male friend) that 'on one occasion he had noticed himself to be possessed by five distinct infatuations at the same time.'

His flagrant infidelities bring about a temporary separation; Grace is not able to comprehend 'such double and treble-barreled hearts.' When finally they are reunited the life-problem of each still awaits an adequate solution. For the motive which brings the girl back to her husband is only a more complex phase of the same motive which chiefly prompted her to marry him. Hardy says that Fitzspiers as a lover acted upon Grace 'like a dram.' His presence 'threw her into an atmosphere which biased her doings until the influence was over.' Afterward she felt 'something of the nature of regret for the mood she had experienced.'

But this same story contains two other char-

acters who are unmatched in fiction as the incarnation of pure love and self-forgetfulness. Giles Winterbourne, whose devotion to Grace is without wish for happiness which shall not imply a greater happiness for her, dies that no breath of suspicion may fall upon her. He in turn is loved by Marty South with a completeness which destroys all thought of self. She enjoys no measure of reward while Winterbourne lives. He never knows of Marty's love. But in that last fine paragraph of this remarkable book, when the poor girl places the flowers upon his grave she utters a little lament which for beauty, pathos, and realistic simplicity is without parallel in modern fiction. Hardy was never more of an artist than when writing the last chapter of *The Woodlanders*.

After all, a book in which unselfish love is described in terms at once just and noble cannot be dangerously pessimistic, even if it also takes cognizance of such hopeless cases as a man with a chronic tendency to fluctuations of the heart.

The matter may be put briefly thus: In Hardy's novels one sees the artistic result of an effort to paint life as it is, with much of its joy and a deal of its sorrow, with its good people and its selfish people, its positive characters and its Laodiceans, its men and women who dominate circumstances, and its unhappy ones who are submerged. These books are the

record of what a clear-eyed, sane, vigorous, sympathetic, humorous man knows about life; a man too conscious of things as they are to wish grossly to exaggerate or to disguise them; and at the same time so entirely aware how much poetry as well as irony God has mingled in the order of the world as to be incapable of concealing that fact either. He is of such ample intellectual frame that he makes the petty contentions of literary schools appear foolish. I find a measure of Hardy's mind in passages which set forth his conception of the preciousness of life, no matter what the form in which life expresses itself. He is peculiarly tender toward brute creation. In that paragraph which describes Tess discovering the wounded pheasants in the wood, Hardy suggests the thought, quite new to many people, that chivalry is not confined to the relations of man to man or of man to woman. There are still weaker fellow-creatures in Nature's teeming family. What if we are unmannerly or unchivalrous toward them?

He abounds in all manner of pithy sayings, many of them wise, a few of them profound, and not one which is unworthy a second reading. It is to be hoped that he will escape the doubtful honor of being dispersedly set forth in a 'Wit and Wisdom of Thomas Hardy.' Such books are a depressing species of literature and seem chiefly designed to be given away at holi-

day time to acquaintances who are too important to be put off with Christmas cards, and not important enough to be supplied with gifts of a calculable value.

One must praise the immense spirit and vivacity of scenes where something in the nature of a struggle, a moral duel, goes on. In such passages every power at the writer's command is needed; unerring directness of thought, and words which clothe this thought as an athlete's garments fit the body. Everything must count, and the movement of the narrative must be sustained to the utmost. The chess-playing scene between Elfride and Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is an illustration. Sergeant Troy displaying his skill in handling the sword — weaving his spell about Bathsheba in true snake fashion, is another example. Still more brilliant is the gambling scene in *The Return of the Native*, where Wildeve and Diggory Venn, out on the heath in the night, throw dice by the light of a lantern for Thomasin's money. Venn, the reddleman, in the Mephistophelian garb of his profession, is the incarnation of a good spirit, and wins the guineas from the clutch of the spendthrift husband. The scene is immensely dramatic, with its accompaniments of blackness and silence, Wildeve's haggard face, the circle of ponies, known as heath-croppers, which are attracted by the light, the death's-head moth which extinguishes the can-

dle, and the finish of the game by the light of glow-worms. It is a glorious bit of writing in true bravura style.

His books have a quality which I shall venture to call 'spaciousness,' in the hope that the word conveys the meaning I try to express. It is obvious that there is a difference between books which are large and books which are merely long. The one epithet refers to atmosphere, the other to number of pages. Hardy writes large books. There is room in them for the reader to expand his mind. They are distinctly out-of-door books, 'not smacking of the cloister or the library.' In reading them one has a feeling that the vault of heaven is very high, and that the earth stretches away to interminable distances upon all sides. This quality of largeness is not dependent upon number of pages; nor is length absolute as applied to books. A book may contain one hundred pages and still be ninety-nine pages too long, for the reason that its truth, its lesson, its literary virtue, are not greater than might be expressed in a single page.

Spaciousness is in even less degree dependent upon miles. The narrowness, geographically speaking, of Hardy's range of expression is notable. There is much contrast between him and Stevenson in this respect. The Scotchman has embodied in his fine books the experiences of life in a dozen different quarters of

the globe. Hardy, with more robust health, has traveled from Portland to Bath, and from 'Wintoncester' to 'Exonbury,' — journeys hardly more serious than from the blue bed to the brown. And it is better thus. No reader of *The Return of the Native* would have been content that Eustacia Vye should persuade her husband back to Paris. Rather than the boulevards one prefers Egdon heath, as Hardy paints it, 'the great inviolate place,' the 'untamable Ishmaelitish thing' which its arch-enemy, Civilization, could not subdue.

He is without question one of the best writers of our time, whether for comedy or for tragedy; and for extravaganza, too, as witness his lively farce called *The Hand of Ethelberta.* He can write dialogue or description. He is so excellent in either that either, as you read it, appears to make for your highest pleasure. If his characters talk, you would gladly have them talk to the end of the book. If he, the author, speaks, you would not wish to interrupt. More than most skillful writers, he preserves that just balance between narrative and colloquy.

His best novels prior to the appearance of *Tess*, are *The Woodlanders*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge.* These four are the bulwarks of his reputation, while a separate and great fame might be based alone on that

powerful tragedy called by its author *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

Criticism which glorifies any one book of a given author at the expense of all his other books is profitless, if not dangerous. Moreover, it is dangerous to have a favorite author as well as a favorite book of that favorite author. A man's choice of books, like his choice of friends, is usually inexplicable to everybody but himself. However, the chief object in recommending books is to make converts to the gospel of literature according to the writer of these books. For which legitimate purpose I would recommend to the reader who has hitherto denied himself the pleasure of an acquaintance with Thomas Hardy, the two volumes known as *The Woodlanders* and *The Return of the Native.* The first of these is the more genial because it presents a more genial side of Nature. But the other is a noble piece of literary workmanship, a powerful book, ingeniously framed, with every detail strongly realized; a book which is dramatic, humorous, sincere in its pathos, rich in its word-coloring, eloquent in its descriptive passages; a book which embodies so much of life and poetry that one has a feeling of mental exaltation as he reads.

Surely it is not wise in the critical Jeremiahs so despairingly to lift up their voices, and so strenuously to bewail the condition of the lit-

erature of the time. The literature of the time is very well, as they would see could they but turn their fascinated gaze from the meretricious and spectacular elements of that literature to the work of Thomas Hardy and George Meredith. With such men among the most influential in modern letters, and with Barrie and Stevenson among the idols of the reading world, it would seem that the office of public Jeremiah should be continued rather from courtesy than from an overwhelming sense of the needs of the hour.

A READING IN THE LETTERS OF JOHN KEATS

One would like to know whether a first reading in the letters of Keats does not generally produce something akin to a severe mental shock. It is a sensation which presently becomes agreeable, being in that respect like a plunge into cold water, but it is undeniably a shock. Most readers of Keats, knowing him, as he should be known, by his poetry, have not the remotest conception of him as he shows himself in his letters. Hence they are unprepared for this splendid exhibition of virile intellectual health. Not that they think of him as morbid, — his poetry surely could not make this impression, — but rather that the popular conception of him is, after all these years, a legendary Keats, the poet who was killed by reviewers, the Keats of Shelley's preface to the *Adonais*, the Keats whose story is written large in the world's book of Pity and of Death. When the readers are confronted with a fair portrait of the real man, it makes them rub their eyes. Nay, more, it embarrasses them. To find themselves guilty of having pitied one

who stood in small need of pity is mortifying. In plain terms, they have systematically bestowed (or have attempted to bestow) alms on a man whose income at its least was bigger than any his patrons could boast. Small wonder that now and then you find a reader, with large capacity for the sentimental, who looks back with terror to his first dip into the letters.

The legendary Keats dies hard; or perhaps we would better say that when he seems to be dying he is simply, in the good old fashion of legends, taking out a new lease of life. For it is as true now as when the sentence was first penned, that 'a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure.' Among the many readers of good books, there will always be some whose notions of the poetical proprieties suffer greatly by the facts of Keats's history. It is so much pleasanter to them to think that the poet's sensitive spirit was wounded to death by bitter words than to know that he was carried off by pulmonary disease. But when they are tired of reading *Endymion*, *Isabella*, and *The Eve of St. Agnes* in the light of this incorrect conception, let them try a new reading in the light of the letters, and the masculinity of this very robust young maker of poetry will prove refreshing.

The letters are in every respect good reading. Rather than deplore their frankness, as

one critic has done, we ought to rejoice in their utter want of affectation, in their boyish honesty. At every turn there is something to amuse or to startle one into thinking. We are carried back in a vivid way to the period of their composition. Not a little of the pulsing life of that time throbs anew, and we catch glimpses of notable figures. Often, the feeling is that we have been called in haste to a window to look at some celebrity passing by, and have arrived just in time to see him turn the corner. What a touch of reality, for example, does one get in reading that 'Wordsworth went rather huff'd out of town'! One is not in the habit of thinking of Wordsworth as capable of being 'huffed,' but the writer of the letters feared that he was. All of Keats's petty anxieties and small doings, as well as his aspirations and his greatest dreams, are set down here in black on white. It is a complete and charming revelation of the man. One learns how he 'went to Hazlitt's lecture on Poetry, and got there just as they were coming out;' how he was insulted at the theatre, and would n't tell his brothers; how it vexed him because the Irish servant said that his picture of Shakespeare looked exactly like her father, only 'her father had more color than the engraving;' how he filled in the time while waiting for the stage to start by counting the buns and tarts in a pastry-cook's window, 'and had just begun

on the jellies;' how indignant he was at being spoken of as 'quite the little poet;' how he sat in a hatter's shop in the Poultry while Mr. Abbey read him some extracts from Lord Byron's 'last flash poem,' *Don Juan;* how some beef was carved exactly to suit his appetite, as if he 'had been measured for it;' how he dined with Horace Smith and his brothers and some other young gentlemen of fashion, and thought them all hopelessly affected; in a word, almost anything you want to know about John Keats can be found in these letters. They are of more value than all the 'recollections' of all his friends put together. In their breezy goodnature and cheerfulness they are a fine antidote to the impression one gets of him in Haydon's account, 'lying in a white bed with a book, hectic and on his back, irritable at his weakness and wounded at the way he had been used. He seemed to be going out of life with a contempt for this world, and no hopes of the other. I told him to be calm, but he muttered that if he did not soon get better he would destroy himself.' This is taking Keats at his worst. It is well enough to know that he seemed to Haydon as Haydon has described him, but few men appear to advantage when they are desperately ill. Turn to the letters written during his tour in Scotland, when he walked twenty miles a day, climbed Ben Nevis, so fatigued himself that, as he told Fanny

Keats, 'when I am asleep you might sew my nose to my great toe and trundle me around the town, like a Hoop, without waking me. Then I get so hungry a Ham goes but a very little way, and fowls are like Larks to me. . . . I take a whole string of Pork Sausages down as easily as a Pen'orth of Lady's fingers.' And then he bewails the fact that when he arrives in the Highlands he will have to be contented 'with an acre or two of oaten cake, a hogshead of Milk, and a Cloaths basket of Eggs morning, noon, and night.' Here is the active Keats, of honest mundane tastes and an athletic disposition, who threatens 'to cut all sick people if they do not make up their minds to cut Sickness.'

Indeed, the letters are so pleasant and amusing in the way they exhibit minor traits, habits, prejudices, and the like, that it is a temptation to dwell upon these things. How we love a man's weaknesses — if we share them! I do not know that Keats would have given occasion for an anecdote like that told of a certain book-loving actor, whose best friend, when urged to join the chorus of praise that was quite universally sung to this actor's virtues, acquiesced by saying amiably, 'Mr. Blank undoubtedly has genius, but he can't spell;' yet there are comforting evidences that Keats was no servile follower of the 'monster Conventionality' even in his spelling, while in respect to the use of capi-

tals he was a law unto himself. He sprinkled them through his correspondence with a lavish hand, though at times he grew so economical that, as one of his editors remarks, he would spell Romeo with a small *r*, Irishman with a small *i*, and God with a small *g*.

It is also a pleasure to find that, with his other failings, he had a touch of book-madness. There was in him the making of a first-class bibliophile. He speaks with rapture of his black-letter Chaucer, which he proposes to have bound 'in Gothique,' so as to unmodernize as much as possible its outward appearance. But to Keats books were literature or they were not literature, and one cannot think that his affections would twine about ever so bookish a volume which was merely 'curious.'

One reads with sympathetic amusement of Keats's genuine and natural horror of paying the same bill twice, 'there not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one others).' The necessity of preserving adequate evidence that a bill had been paid was uppermost in his thought quite frequently; and once when, at Leigh Hunt's instance, sundry packages of papers belonging to that eminently methodical and businesslike man of letters were to be sorted out and in part destroyed, Keats refused to burn any, 'for fear of demolishing receipts.'

But the reader will chance upon few more

humorous passages than that in which the poet tells his brother George how he cures himself of the blues, and at the same time spurs his flagging powers of invention: 'Whenever I find myself growing vaporish I rouse myself, wash and put on a clean shirt, brush my hair and clothes, tie my shoe-strings neatly, and, in fact, adonize, as if I were going out — then all clean and comfortable, I sit down to write. This I find the greatest relief.' The virtues of a clean shirt have often been sung, but it remained for Keats to show what a change of linen and a general *adonizing* could do in the way of furnishing poetic stimulus. This is better than coffee, brandy, absinthe, or falling in love; and it prompts one to think anew that the English poets, taking them as a whole, were a marvelously healthy and sensible breed of men.

It is, however, in respect to the light they throw upon the poet's literary life that the letters are of highest significance. They gratify to a reasonable extent that natural desire we all have to see authorship in the act. The processes by which genius brings things to pass are so mysterious that our curiosity is continually piqued; and our failure to get at the real thing prompts us to be more or less content with mere externals. If we may not hope to see the actual process of making poetry, we may at least study the poet's manuscript. By

knowing of his habits of work we flatter ourselves that we are a little nearer the secret of his power.

We must bear in mind that Keats was a boy, always a boy, and that he died before he quite got out of boyhood. To be sure, most boys of twenty-six would resent being described by so juvenile a term. But one must have successfully passed twenty-six without doing anything in particular to understand how exceedingly young twenty-six is. And to have wrought so well in so short a time, Keats must have had from the first a clear and noble conception of the nature of his work, as he must also have displayed extraordinary diligence in the doing of it. Perhaps these points are too obvious, and of a sort which would naturally occur to any one; but it will be none the less interesting to see how the letters bear witness to their truth.

In the first place, Keats was anything but a loafer at literature. He seems never to have dawdled. A fine healthiness is apparent in all allusions to his processes of work. 'I read and write about eight hours a day,' he remarks in a letter to Haydon. Bailey, Keats's Oxford friend, says that the fellow would go to his writing-desk soon after breakfast, and stay there until two or three o'clock in the afternoon. He was then writing *Endymion.* His stint was about 'fifty lines a day, . . . and he

wrote with as much regularity, and apparently with as much ease, as he wrote his letters. . . . Sometimes he fell short of his allotted task, but not often, and he would make it up another day. But he never forced himself.' Bailey quotes, in connection with this, Keats's own remark to the effect that poetry would better not come at all than not to come 'as naturally as the leaves of a tree.' Whether this spontaneity of production was as great as that of some other poets of his time may be questioned; but he would never have deserved Tom Nash's sneer at those writers who can only produce by 'sleeping betwixt every sentence.' Keats had in no small degree the 'fine extemporal vein' with 'invention quicker than his eye.'

We uncritically feel that it could hardly have been otherwise in the case of one with whom poetry was a passion. Keats had an infinite hunger and thirst for good poetry. His poetical life, both in the receptive and productive phases of it, was intense. Poetry was meat and drink to him. He could even urge his friend Reynolds to talk about it to him, much as one might beg a trusted friend to talk about one's lady-love, and with the confidence that only the fitting thing would be spoken. 'Whenever you write, say a word or two on some passage in Shakespeare which may have come rather new to you,' — a sentence which shows

his faith in the many-sidedness of the great poetry. Shakespeare was forever 'coming new' to *him*, and he was 'haunted' by particular passages. He loved to fill the cup of his imagination with the splendors of the best poets until the cup overflowed. 'I find I cannot exist without Poetry, — without eternal Poetry; half the day will not do, — the whole of it; I began with a little, but habit has made me a leviathan.' He tells Leigh Hunt, in a letter written from Margate, that he thought so much about poetry, and 'so long together,' that he could not get to sleep at night. Whether this meant in working out ideas of his own, or living over the thoughts of other poets, is of little importance; the remark shows how deeply the roots of his life were imbedded in poetical soil. He loved a debauch in the verse of masters of his art. He could intoxicate himself with Shakespeare's sonnets. He rioted in 'all their fine things said unconsciously.' We are tempted to say, by just so much as he had large reverence for these men, by just so much he was of them.

Undoubtedly, this ability to be moved by strong imaginative work may be abused until it becomes a maudlin and quite disordered sentiment. Keats was too well balanced to be carried into appreciative excesses. He knew that mere yearning could not make a poet of one any more than mere ambition could. He under-

stood the limits of ambition as a force in literature. Keats's ambition trembled in the presence of Keats's conception of the magnitude of the poetic office. 'I have asked myself so often why I should be a poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is.' Yet he had honest confidence. One cannot help liking him for the fine audacity with which he pronounces his own work good, — better even than that of a certain other great name in English literature; one cannot help loving him for the sweet humility with which he accepts the view that, after all, success or failure lies entirely without the range of self-choosing. There is a point of view from which it is folly to hold a poet responsible even for his own poetry, and when *Endymion* was spoken of as 'slipshod' Keats could reply, 'That it is so is no fault of mine. . . . The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. . . . That which is creative must create itself. In *Endymion* I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest.'

Well might a man who could write that last sentence look upon poetry not only as a respon-

sible, but as a dangerous pursuit. Men who aspire to be poets are gamblers. In all the lotteries of the literary life none is so uncertain as this. A million chances that you don't win the prize to one chance that you do. It is a curious thing that ever so thoughtful and conscientious an author may not know whether he is making literature or merely writing verse. He conforms to all the canons of taste in his own day; he is devout and reverent; he shuns excesses of diction, and he courts originality; his verse seems to himself and to his unflattering friends instinct with the spirit of his time, but twenty years later it is old-fashioned. Keats, with all his feeling of certainty, stood with head uncovered before that power which gives poetical gifts to one, and withholds them from another. Above all would he avoid self-delusion in these things. 'There is no greater Sin after the seven deadly than to flatter one's self into an idea of being a great Poet.'

Keats, if one may judge from a letter written to John Taylor in February, 1818, had little expectation that his *Endymion* was going to be met with universal plaudits. He doubtless looked for fair treatment. He probably had no thought of being sneeringly addressed as 'Johnny,' or of getting recommendations to return to his 'plasters, pills, and ointment boxes.' In fact, he looked upon the issue as entirely problematical. He seemed willing to

take it for granted that in *Endymion* he had but moved into the go-cart from the leading-strings. 'If *Endymion* serves me for a pioneer, perhaps I ought to be content, for thank God I can read and perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths; and I have, I am sure, many friends who if I fail will attribute any change in my life to humbleness rather than pride, — to a cowering under the wings of great poets rather than to bitterness that I am not appreciated.' And for evidence of any especial bitterness because of the lashing he received one will search the letters in vain. Keats was manly and good-humored, most of his morbidity being referred directly to his ill health. The trouncing he had at the hands of the reviewers was no more violent than the one administered to Tennyson by Professor Wilson. Critics, good and bad, can do much harm. They may terrorize a timid spirit. But a greater terror than the fear of the reviewers hung over the head of John Keats. He stood in awe of his own artistic and poetic sense. He could say with truth that his own domestic criticism had given him pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict. If he had had any terrible heart-burning over their malignancy, if he had felt that his life was poisoned, he could hardly have forborne some allusion to it in his letters to his brother, George Keats. But he is almost im-

perturbable. He talks of the episode freely, says that he has been urged to publish his *Pot of Basil* as a reply to the reviewers, has no idea that he can be made ridiculous by abuse, notes the futility of attacks of this kind, and then, with a serene conviction that is irresistible, adds, 'I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death!'

Such egoism of genius is magnificent; the more so as it appears in Keats because it runs parallel with deep humility in the presence of the masters of his art. Naturally, the masters who were in their graves were the ones he reverenced the most and read without stint. But it was by no means essential that a poet be a dead poet before Keats did him homage. It is impossible to think that Keats's attitude towards Wordsworth was other than finely appreciative, in spite of the fact that he applauded Reynolds's *Peter Bell*, and inquired almost petulantly why one should be teased with Wordsworth's 'Matthew with a bough of wilding in his hand.' But it is also impossible that his sense of humor should not have been aroused by much that he found in Wordsworth. It was Wordsworth he meant when he said, 'Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself,' — a sentence, by the way, quite as unconsciously funny as some of the things he laughed at in the works of his great contemporary.

It will be pertinent to quote here two or three of the good critical words which Keats scattered through his letters. Emphasizing the use of simple means in his art, he says, 'I think that poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.'

'We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us. . . . Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject.' Or as Ruskin has put the thing with respect to painting, 'Entirely first-rate work is so quiet and natural that there can be no dispute over it.'

Keats appears to have been in no sense a hermit. With the exception of Byron, he was perhaps less of a recluse than any of his poetical contemporaries. With respect to society he frequently practiced total abstinence; but the world was amusing, and he liked it. He was fond of the theatre, fond of whist, fond of visiting the studios, fond of going to the houses of his friends. But he would run no risks; he was shy and he was proud. He dreaded contact with the ultra-fashionables. Naturally, his opportunities for such intercourse were limited, but he cheerfully neglected his opportunities. I doubt if he ever bewailed his humble origin; nevertheless, the constitution of English society

would hardly admit of his forgetting it. He had that pardonable pride which will not allow a man to place himself among those who, though outwardly fair-spoken, offer the insult of a hostile and patronizing mental attitude.

Most of his friendships were with men, and this is to his credit. The man is spiritually warped who is incapable of a deep and abiding friendship with one of his own sex; and to go a step farther, that man is utterly to be distrusted whose only friends are among women. We may not be prepared to accept the radical position of a certain young thinker, who proclaims, in season, but defiantly, that 'men are the idealists, after all;' yet it is easy to comprehend how one may take this point of view. The friendships of men are a vastly more interesting and poetic study than the friendships of men and women. This is in the nature of the case. It is the usual victory of the normal over the abnormal. As a rule, it is impossible for a friendship to exist between a man and woman, unless the man and woman in question be husband and wife. Then it is as rare as it is beautiful. And with men, the most admirable spectacle is not always that where attendant circumstances prompt to heroic display of friendship, for it is often so much easier to die than to live. But you may see young men pledging their mutual love and support in this difficult and adventurous quest of what is

noblest in the art of living. Such love will not urge to a theatrical posing, and it can hardly find expression in words. Words seem to profane it. I do not say that Keats stood in such an ideal relation to any one of his many friends whose names appear in the letters. He gave of himself to them all, and he received much from each. No man of taste and genius could have been other than flattered by the way in which Keats approached him. He was charming in his attitude toward Haydon; and when Haydon proposed sending Keats's sonnet to Wordsworth, the young poet wrote, 'The Idea of your sending it to Wordsworth put me out of breath — you know with what Reverence I would send my well wishes to him.'

But interesting as a chapter on Keats's friendships with men would be, we are bound to confess that in dramatic intensity it would grow pale when laid beside that fiery love passage of his life, his acquaintance with Fanny Brawne. The thirty-nine letters given in the fourth volume of Buxton Forman's edition of *Keats's Works* tell the story of this affair of a poet's heart. These are the letters which Mr. William Watson says he has never read, and at which no consideration shall ever induce him to look. But Mr. Watson reflects upon people who have been human enough to read them when he compares such a proceeding on his own part (were he able to be guilty of it) to the

indelicacy of 'listening at a keyhole or spying over a wall.' This is not a just illustration. The man who takes upon himself the responsibility of being the first to open such intimate letters, and adds thereto the infinitely greater responsibility of publishing them in so attractive a form that he who runs will stop running in order to read, — such an editor will need to satisfy Mr. Watson that in so doing he was not listening at a keyhole or spying over a wall. For the general public, the wall is down, and the door containing the keyhole thrown open. Perhaps our duty is not to look. I, for one, wish that great men would not leave their love letters around. Nay, I wish you a better wish than that: it is that the perfect taste of the gentleman and scholar who gave us in its present form the correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, the early and later letters of Carlyle, and the letters of Lowell might have control of the private papers of every man of genius whose teachings the world holds dear. He would need for this an indefinite lease upon life; but since I am wishing, let me wish largely. There is need of such wishing. Many editors have been called, and only two or three chosen.

But why one who reads the letters of Keats to Fanny Brawne should have any other feeling than that of pity for a poor fellow who was so desperately in love as to be wretched be-

cause of it I do not see. Even a cynic will grant that Keats was not disgraced, since it is very clear that he did not yield readily to what Dr. Holmes calls the great passion. He had a complacent boyish superiority of attitude with respect to all those who are weak enough to love women. 'Nothing,' he says, 'strikes me so forcibly with a sense of the ridiculous as love. A man in love I do think cuts the sorryest figure in the world. Even when I know a poor fool to be really in pain about it I could burst out laughing in his face. His pathetic visage becomes irresistible.' Then he speaks of that dinner party of stutterers and squinters described in the *Spectator*, and says that it would please him more 'to scrape together a party of lovers.' If this letter be genuine and the date of it correctly given, it was written three months after he had succumbed to the attractions of Fanny Brawne. Perhaps he was trying to brave it out, as one may laugh to conceal embarrassment.

In a much earlier letter than this he hopes he shall never marry, but nevertheless has a good deal to say about a young lady with fine eyes and fine manners and a 'rich Eastern look.' He discovers that he can talk to her without being uncomfortable or ill at ease. 'I am too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or in a tremble. . . . She kept me awake one night as a tune of Mozart's might do. . . .

I don't cry to take the moon home with me in my pocket, nor do I fret to leave her behind me.' But he was not a little touched, and found it easy to fill two pages on the subject of this dark beauty. She was a friend of the Reynolds family. She crosses the stage of the Keats drama in a very impressive manner, and then disappears.

The most extraordinary passage to be met with in relation to the poet's attitude towards women is in a letter written to Benjamin Bailey in July, 1818. As a partial hint towards its full meaning I would take two phrases in *Daniel Deronda*. George Eliot says of Gwendolen Harleth that there was 'a certain fierceness of maidenhood in her,' which expression is quoted here only to emphasize the girl's feeling towards men as described a little later, when Rex Gascoigne attempted to tell her his love. Gwendolen repulsed him with a sort of fury that was surprising to herself. The author's interpretative comment is, '*The life of passion had begun negatively in her.*'

So one might say of Keats that the life of passion began negatively in him. He was conscious of a hostility of temper towards women. 'I am certain I have not a right feeling toward women — at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot.' He certainly started with a preposterously high ideal, for he says that when a schoolboy he thought a fair

woman a pure goddess. And now he is disappointed at finding women only the equals of men. This disappointment helps to give rise to that antagonism which is almost inexplicable save as George Eliot's phrase throws light upon it. He thinks that he insults women by these perverse feelings of unprovoked hostility. 'Is it not extraordinary,' he exclaims, 'when among men I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen; I feel free to speak or to be silent; . . . I am free from all suspicion, and comfortable. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen; I cannot speak or be silent; I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing; I am in a hurry to be gone.' He wonders how this trouble is to be cured. He speaks of it as a prejudice produced from 'a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravel.' And then, with a good-humored, characteristic touch, he drops the subject, saying, 'After all, I do think better of women than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats, five feet high, likes them or not.'

Three or four months after writing these words he must have begun his friendly relations with the Brawne family. This would be in October or November, 1818. Keats's description of Fanny is hardly flattering, and not even vivid. What is one to make of the colorless expression 'a fine style of countenance of

the lengthened sort'? But she was fair to him, and any beauty beyond that would have been superfluous. We look at the silhouette and sigh in vain for trace of the loveliness which ensnared Keats. But if our daguerreotypes of forty years ago can so entirely fail of giving one line of that which in its day passed for dazzling beauty, let us not be unreasonable in our demands upon the artistic capabilities of a silhouette. Not infrequently is it true that the style of dress seems to disfigure. But we have learned, in course of experience, that pretty women manage to be pretty, however much fashion, with their cordial help, disguises them.

It is easy to see from the letters that Keats was a difficult lover. Hard to please at the best, his two sicknesses, one of body and one of heart, made him whimsical. Nothing less than a woman of genius could possibly have managed him. He was jealous, perhaps quite unreasonably so. Fanny Brawne was young, a bit coquettish, buoyant, and he misinterpreted her vivacity. She liked what is commonly called 'the world,' and so did he when he was well; but looking through the discolored glass of ill health, all nature was out of harmony. For these reasons it happens that the letters at times come very near to being documents in love-madness. Many a line in them gives sharp pain, as a record of heart-suffering must

always do. You may read Richard Steele's love letters for pleasure, and have it. The love letters of Keats scorch and sting; and the worst of it is that you cannot avoid reflecting upon the transitory character of such a passion. Withering young love like this does not last. It may burn itself out, or, what is quite as likely, it may become sober and rational. But in its earlier maddened state it cannot possibly last; a man would die under it. Men as a rule do not so die, for the race of the Azra is nearly extinct.

These Brawne letters, however, are not without their bright side; and it is wonderful to see how Keats's elastic nature would rebound the instant that the pressure of the disease relaxed. He is at times almost gay. The singing of a thrush prompts him to talk in his natural epistolary voice: 'There 's the Thrush again — I can't afford it — he 'll run me up a pretty Bill for Music — besides he ought to know I deal at Clementi's.' And in the letter which he wrote to Mrs. Brawne from Naples is a touch of the old bantering Keats when he says that 'it 's misery to have an intellect in splints.' He was never strong enough to write again to Fanny, or even to read her letters.

I should like to close this reading with a few sentences from a letter written to Reynolds in February, 1818. Keats says: 'I had an idea that a man might pass a very pleasant life in

this manner — let him on a certain day read a certain Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose, and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, . . . and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it, until it becomes stale — but when will it do so? Never! When Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting post towards all the "two-and-thirty Palaces." How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious diligent Indolence! . . . Nor will this sparing touch of noble Books be any irreverence to their Writers — for perhaps the honors paid by Man to Man are trifles in comparison to the Benefit done by great Works to the Spirit and pulse of good by their mere passive existence.'

May we not say that the final test of great literature is that it be able to be read in the manner here indicated? As Keats read, so did he write. His own work was

'accomplished in repose
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.'

AN ELIZABETHAN NOVELIST

THE fathers in English literature were not a little given to writing books which they called 'anatomies.' Thomas Nash, for example, wrote an *Anatomy of Absurdities*, and Stubbes an *Anatomy of Abuses*. Greene, the novelist, entitled one of his romances *Arbasto, the Anatomy of Fortune*. The most famous book which bears a title of this kind is the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, by Robert Burton. It is notable, first, for its inordinate length; second, for its readableness, considering the length and the depth of it; third, for its prodigal and barbaric display of learning; and last, because it is said to have had the effect of making the most indolent man of letters of the eighteenth century get up betimes in the morning. Why Dr. Johnson needed to get up in order to read the *Anatomy of Melancholy* will always be an enigma to some. Perhaps he did not get up. Perhaps he merely sat up and reached for the book, which would have been placed conveniently near the bed. For the virtue of the act resided in the circumstance of his being awake and reading a good book two hours ahead of

his wonted time for beginning his day. If he colored his remark so as to make us think he got up and dressed before reading, he may be forgiven. It was innocently spoken. Just as a man who lives in one room will somehow involuntarily fall into the habit of speaking of that one room in the plural, so the doctor added a touch which would render him heroic in the eyes of those who knew him. I should like a pictorial book-plate representing Dr. Johnson, in gown and nightcap, sitting up in bed reading the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, with Hodge, the cat, curled up contentedly at his feet.

It would be interesting to know whether Johnson ever read, in bed or out, a book called *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit.* It was published in the spring of 1579 by Gabriel Cawood, 'dwelling in Paules Churchyard,' and was followed one year later by a second part, *Euphues and his England.* These books were the work of John Lyly, a young Oxford Master of Arts. According to the easy orthography of that time (if the word orthography may be applied to a practice by virtue of which every man spelled as seemed right in his own eyes), Lyly's name is found in at least six forms: Lilye, Lylie, Lilly, Lyllie, Lyly, and Lylly. Remembering the willingness of *i* and *y* to bear one another's burdens, we may still exclaim, with Dr. Ingleby, 'Great is the mystery of archaic spelling!'

Great indeed when a man sometimes had more suits of letters to his name than suits of clothes to his back. That the name of this young author was pronounced as was the name of the flower, lily, seems the obvious inference from Henry Upchear's verses, which contain punning allusions to Lyly and Robert Greene: —

'Of all the flowers a Lillie once I lov'd
Whose laboring beautie brancht itself abroad,' etc.

Original editions of the *Anatomy of Wit* and its fellow are very rare. Probably there is not a copy of either book in the United States. This statement is ventured in good faith, and may have the effect of bringing to light a hitherto neglected copy.[1] Strange it is that princely collectors of yore appear not to have cared for *Euphues*. Surely one would not venture to affirm that John, Duke of Roxburghe, might not have had it if he had wanted it. The book is not to be found in his sale catalogue; he had Lyly's plays in quarto, seven of them

[1] The writer of this paper once sent to that fine scholar and gracious gentleman, Professor Edward Arber, to inquire whether in his opinion one might hope to buy at a modest price a copy of either the first or the second part of *Euphues*. Professor Arber's reply was amusingly emphatic: 'You might as well try to purchase one of Mahomet's old slippers.' But in July of 1896 there were four copies of this old novel on sale at one New York bookstore. One of the copies was of great beauty, consisting of the two parts of the story bound up together in a really sumptuous fashion. The price was not large as prices of such books go, but on the other hand ''a was not small.'

each marked 'rare,' and he had two copies of a well-known book called *Euphues Golden Legacie*, written by Thomas Nash. The Perkins Sale catalogue shows neither of Lyly's novels. List after list of the spoils of mighty book-hunters has only a blank where the *Anatomy of Wit* ought to be. From this we may argue great scarcity, or great indifference, or both. In the compact little reprint made by Professor Arber one may read this moral tale, which was fashionable when Shakespeare was a youth of sixteen. For convenience it will be advisable to speak of it as a single work in two parts, for such it practically is.

To pronounce upon this romance is not easy. We read a dozen or two of pages, and say, 'This is very fantastical humours.' We read further, and are tempted to follow Sir Hugh to the extent of declaring, 'This is lunatics.' One may venture the not profound remark that it takes all sorts of books to make a literature. *Euphues* is one of the books that would prompt to that very remark. For he who first said that it takes all sorts of people to make a world was markedly impressed with the differences between those people and himself. He had in mind eccentric folk, types which deviate from the normal and the sane. So *Euphues* is a very Malvolio among books, cross-gartered and wreathed as to its countenance with set smiles. The curious in literary history will always enjoy

such a production. The verdict of that part of the reading world which keeps a book alive by calling for fresh copies of it after the old copies are worn out is against *Euphues*. It had a vivacious existence between 1579 and 1636, and then went into a literary retirement lasting two hundred and thirty-six years. When it again came before the public it was introduced as 'a great bibliographical rarity.' Its fatal old-fashionedness hangs like a millstone about its neck. In the poems of Chaucer and the dramas of Shakespeare are a thousand touches which make the reader feel that Chaucer and Shakespeare are his contemporaries, that they have written in his own time, and published but yesterday. Read *Euphues*, and you will say to yourself, 'That book must have been written three hundred years ago, and it looks its age.' Yet it has its virtues. One may not say of it, as Johnson said of the *Rehearsal*, that it 'has not wit enough to keep it sweet.' Neither may he, upon second thought, conclude that 'it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction.' It has, indeed, a bottom of good sense; and so had Malvolio. It is filled from end to beginning with wit, or with what passed for wit among many readers of that day. Often the wit is of a tawdry and spectacular sort, — mere verbal wit, the use of a given word not because it is the best word, the most fitting word, but because the author wants a word

beginning with the letter G, or the letter M, or the letter F, as the case may be. On the second page of Greene's *Arbasto* is this sentence: 'He did not so much as vouchsafe to give an *eare* to my *parle*, or an *eye* to my *person*.' Greene learned this trick from Lyly, who was a master of the art. The sentence represents one of the common forms in *Euphues*, such as this: 'To the stomach *quatted* with *dainties* all *delicates* seem *queasie*.' Sometimes the balance is preserved by three words on a side. For example, the companions whom Euphues found in Naples practiced arts 'whereby they might either *soake* his *purse* to reape *commodotie*, or *sooth* his *person* to winne *credite*.' Other illustrations are these: I can neither '*remember* our *miseries* without *griefe*, nor *redresse* our *mishaps* without *grones*.' 'If the *wasting* of our *money* might not *dehort* us, yet the *wounding* of our *mindes* should *deterre* us.' This next sentence, with its combination of K sounds, clatters like a pair of castanets: 'Though Curio bee as hot as a toast, yet Euphues is as cold as a clocke, though hee bee a cocke of the game, yet Euphues is content to bee craven and crye creake.'

Excess of alliteration is the most obvious feature of Lyly's style. That style has been carefully analyzed by those who are learned in such things. The study is interesting, with its talk of alliteration and transverse alliteration,

antithesis, climax, and assonance. In truth, one does not know which to admire the more, the ingenuity of the man who constructed the book, or the ingenuity of the scholars who have explained how he did it. Between Lyly on the one hand, and the grammarians on the other, the reader is almost tempted to ask if this be literature or mathematics. Whether Lyly got his style from Pettie or Guevara is an important question, but he made it emphatically his own, and it will never be called by any other name than Euphuism. The making of a book on this plan is largely the result of astonishing mental gymnastics. It commands respect in no small degree, because Lyly was able to keep it up so long. To walk from New York to Albany, as did the venerable Weston not so very long since, is a great test of human endurance. But walking is the employment of one's legs and body in God's appointed way of getting over the ground. Suppose a man were to undertake to hop on one leg from New York to Albany, the utility or the æsthetic value of the performance would be less obvious. The most successful artist in hopping could hardly expect applause from the right-minded. He would excite attention because he was able to hop so far, and not because he was the exponent of a praiseworthy method of locomotion. Lyly gained eminence by doing to a greater extent than any man a thing that was not worth

doing at all. One is more astonished at Lyly's power of endurance as author than at his own power of endurance as reader. For the volume is actually readable even at this day. Did Lyly not grow wearied of perpetually riding these alliterative trick-ponies? Apparently not. The book is 'executed' with a vivacity, a dash, a 'go,' that will captivate any reader who is willing to meet the author halfway. *Euphues* became the rage, and its literary style the fashion. How or why must be left to him to explain who can tell why sleeves grow small and then grow big, why skirts are at one time only two and a half yards around and at another time five and a half or eight yards around. An Elizabethan gentleman might be too poor to dress well, but he would squander his last penny in getting his ruff starched. Lyly's style bristles with extravagances of the starched ruff sort, which only serve to call attention to the intellectual deficiencies in the matter of doublet and hose.

Of plot or story there is but little. The hero, Euphues, who gives the title to the romance, is a young, clever, and rich Athenian. He visits Naples, where his money and wit attract many to his side. By his careless, pleasure-seeking mode of life he wakens the fatherly interest of a wise old gentleman, Eubulus, who calls upon him to warn him of his danger. The conversation between the two is

the first and not the least amusing illustration of the courtly verbal fencing with which the book is filled. The advice of the old man only provokes Euphues into making the sophistical plea that his style of living is right because nature prompts him to it; and he leaves Eubulus 'in a great quandary' and in tears. Nevertheless, the old gentleman has the righteous energy which prompts him to say to the departing Euphues, already out of hearing, 'Seeing thou wilt not buy counsel at the first hand good cheap, thou shalt buy repentance at the second hand, at such unreasonable rate, that thou wilt curse thy hard pennyworth, and ban thy hard heart.' Euphues takes to himself a new sworn brother, one Philautus, who carries him to visit his lady-love, Lucilla. Lucilla is rude at first, but becomes enamored of Euphues's conversational power, and finally of himself. In fact, she unceremoniously throws over her former lover, and tells her father that she will either marry Euphues or else lead apes in hell. This causes a break in the friendship between Euphues and Philautus, and there is an exchange of formidably worded letters, in which Philautus reminds Euphues that all Greeks are liars, and Euphues quotes Euripides to the effect that all is lawful in love. Lucilla, who is fickle, suddenly dismisses her new cavalier for yet a third, while Euphues and Philautus, in the light of their common misfortune,

fall upon each other's necks and are reconciled. Both profess themselves to have been fools, while Euphues, as the greater and more recent fool, composes a pamphlet against love. This he calls a 'cooling-card.' It is addressed primarily to Philautus, but contains general advice for 'all fond lovers.' Euphues's own cure was radical, for he says, 'Now do I give a farewell to the world, meaning rather to macerate myself with melancholy, than pine in folly, rather choosing to die in my study amidst my books than to court it in Italy in the company of ladies.' He returns to Athens, applies himself to the study of philosophy, becomes public reader in the University, and, as crowning evidence that he has finished sowing his wild oats, produces three volumes of lectures. Realizing how much of his own youth has been wasted, he writes a pamphlet on the education of the young, a dialogue with an atheist, and these, with a bundle of letters, make up the first part of the *Anatomy of Wit.* From one of the letters we learn that Lucilla was as frail as she was beautiful, and that she died in evil report. The story, including the diatribe against love, is about as long as *The Vicar of Wakefield.* It begins as a romance and ends as a sermon.

The continuation of the novel, *Euphues and his England,* is a little over a third longer than Part One. The two friends carry out their project of visiting England. After a wearisome

voyage they reach Dover, view the cliffs and the castle, and then proceed to Canterbury. Between Canterbury and London they stop for a while with a 'comely olde gentleman,' Fidus, who keeps bees and tells good stories. He also gives sound advice as to the way in which strangers should conduct themselves. A lively bit of writing is the account which Fidus gives of his commonwealth of bees. It is not according to Lubbock, but is none the less amusing. In London the two travelers become favorites at the court. Philautus falls in love, to the great annoyance of Euphues, who argues mightily with him against such folly. The two gentlemen expend vast resources of stationery and language upon the subject. They quarrel violently, and Euphues becomes so irritated that he must needs go and rent new lodgings, 'which by good friends he quickly got, and there fell to his *Pater noster*, where awhile,' says Lyly innocently, 'I will not trouble him in his prayers.' They are reconciled later, and Philautus obtains permission to love; but he has discovered in the mean time that the lady will not have him. The account of his passion, how it 'boiled and bubbled,' of his visit to the soothsayer to purchase love charms, his stately declamations to Camilla and her elaborate replies to him, of his love letter concealed in a pomegranate, and her answer stitched into a copy of Petrarch, — is all very lively reading,

much more so than that dreary love-making between Pyrocles and Philoclea, or between any other pair of the many exceedingly tiresome folk in Sidney's *Arcadia*. Grant that it is deliciously absurd. It is not to be supposed that a clever eighteen-year-old girl, replying to a declaration of love, will talk in the language of a trained nurse, and say: 'Green sores are to be dressed roughly lest they fester, tettars are to be drawn in the beginning lest they spread, Ringworms to be anointed when they first appear lest they compass the whole body, and the assaults of love to be beaten back at the first siege lest they undermine at the second.' Was ever suitor in this fashion rejected! It makes one think of some of the passages in the *History of John Buncle*, where the hero pours out a torrent of passionate phrases, and the 'glorious' Miss Noel, in reply, begs that they may take up some rational topic of conversation; for example, what is *his* view of that opinion which ascribes 'primævity and sacred prerogatives' to the Hebrew language.

But Philautus does not break his heart over Camilla's rejection. He is consoled with the love of another fair maiden, marries her, and settles in England. Euphues goes back to Athens, and presently retires to the country, where he follows the calling of one whose profession is melancholy. Like most hermits of culture, he leaves his address with his banker.

We assume this, for he was very rich; it is not difficult to be a hermit on a large income. The book closes with a section called 'Euphues Glasse for Europe,' a thirty-page panegyric on England and the Queen.

They say that this novel was very popular, and certain causes of its popularity are not difficult to come at. A large measure of the success that *Euphues* had is due to the commonplaceness of its observations. It abounds in proverbs and copy-book wisdom. In this respect it is as homely as an almanac. John Lyly had a great store of 'miscellany thoughts,' and he cheerfully parted with them. His book succeeded as Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* and Watts' *On the Mind* succeeded. People believed that they were getting ideas, and people like what they suppose to be ideas if no great effort is required in the getting of them. It is astonishing how often the world needs to be advised of the brevity of time. Yet every person who can wade in the shallows of his own mind and not wet his shoe-tops finds a sweet melancholy and a stimulating freshness in the thought that time is short. John Lyly said, 'There is nothing more swifter than time, nothing more sweeter,' — and countless Elizabethan gentlemen and ladies underscored that sentence, or transferred it to their commonplace books, — if they had such painful aids to culture, — and were comforted and edified by

the discovery that brilliant John Lyly had made. This glib command of the matter-of-course, with a ready use of the proverb and the 'old said saw,' is a marked characteristic of the work. It emphasizes the youth of its author. We learn what could not have been new even in 1579, that 'in misery it is a great comfort to have a companion;' that 'a new broom sweepeth clean;' that 'delays breed dangers;' that 'nothing is so perilous as procrastination;' that 'a burnt child dreadeth the fire;' that it is well not to make comparisons 'lest comparisons should seem odious;' that 'it is too late to shut the stable door when the steed is stolen;' that 'many things fall between the cup and the lip;' and that 'marriages are made in heaven, though consummated on earth.' With these old friends come others, not altogether familiar of countenance, and quaintly archaic in their dress: 'It must be a wily mouse that shall breed in the cat's ear;' 'It is a mad hare that will be caught with a tabor, and a foolish bird that stayeth the laying salt on her tail, and a blind goose that cometh to the fox's sermon.' Lyly would sometimes translate a proverb; he does not tell us that fine words butter no parsnips, but says, 'Fair words fat few,' — which is delightfully alliterative, but hardly to be accounted an improvement. Expressions that are surprisingly modern turn up now and then. One American street urchin taunts another by

telling him that he does n't know enough to come in when it rains. The saying is at least three hundred years old, for Lyly says, in a dyspeptic moment, 'So much wit is sufficient for a woman as when she is in the rain can warn her to come out of it.'

Another cause of the popularity of *Euphues* is its sermonizing. The world loves to hear good advice. The world is not nervously anxious to follow the advice, but it understands the edification that comes by preaching. With many persons, to have heard a sermon is almost equivalent to having practiced the virtues taught in the sermon. Churches are generally accepted as evidences of civilization. A man who is exploiting the interests of a new Western town will invariably tell you that it has so many churches. Also, an opera-house. The English world above all other worlds loves to hear good advice. England is the natural home of the sermon. Jusserand notes, almost with wonder, that in the annual statistics of the London publishers the highest numbers indicate the output of sermons and theological works. Then come novels. John Lyly was ingenious; he combined good advice and story-telling. Not skillfully, hiding the sermon amid lively talk and adventure, but blazoning the fact that he was going to moralize as long as he would. He shows no timidity, even declares upon one of his title-pages that in this volume

'there is small offense by lightness given to the wise, and less occasion of looseness proffered to the wanton.' Such courage in this day would be apt seriously to injure the sale of a novel. Did not Ruskin declare that Miss Edgeworth had made virtue so obnoxious that since her time one hardly dared express the slightest bias in favor of the Ten Commandments? Lyly knew the public for which he acted as literary caterer. They liked sermons, and sermons they should have. Nearly every character in the book preaches, and Euphues is the most gifted of them all. Even that old gentleman of Naples who came first to Euphues because his heart bled to see so noble a youth given to loose living has the tables turned upon him, for Euphues preaches to the preacher upon the sovereign duty of resignation to the will of God.

A noteworthy characteristic is the frequency of Lyly's classical allusions. If the only definition of pedantry be 'vain and ostentatious display of learning,' I question if we may dismiss Lyly's wealth of classical lore with the word 'pedantry.' He was fresh from his university life. If he studied at all when he was at Oxford, he must have studied Latin and Greek, for after these literatures little else was studied. Young men and their staid tutors were compelled to know ancient history and mythology. Like Heine, they may have taken a 'real

delight in the mob of gods and goddesses who ran so jolly naked about the world.' In the first three pages of the *Anatomy of Wit* there are twenty classical names, ten of them coupled each with an allusion. Nobody begins a speech without a reference of this nature within calling distance. Euphues and Philautus fill their talk with evidences of a classical training. The ladies are provided with apt remarks drawn from the experiences of Helen, of Cornelia, of Venus, of Diana, and Vesta. Even the master of the ship which conveyed Euphues from Naples to England declaims about Ulysses and Julius Cæsar. This naturally destroys all dramatic effect. Everybody speaks Euphuism, though classical allusion alone is not essentially Euphuistic. John Lyly would be the last man to merit any portion of that fine praise bestowed by Hazlitt upon Shakespeare when he said that Shakespeare's genius 'consisted in the faculty of transforming himself at will into whatever he chose.' Lyly's genius was the opposite of this; it consisted in the faculty of transforming everybody into a reduplication of himself. There is no change in style when the narrative parts end and the dialogue begins. All the persons of the drama utter one strange tongue. They are no better than the characters in a Punch and Judy show, where one concealed manipulator furnishes voice for each of the figures. But in Lyly's novel there is not even

an attempt at the most rudimentary ventriloquism.

What makes the book still less a reflection of life is that the speakers indulge in interminably long harangues. No man (unless he were a Coleridge) would be tolerated who talked in society at such inordinate length. When the characters can't talk to one another they retire to their chambers and declaim to themselves. They polish their language with the same care, open the classical dictionary, and have at themselves in good set terms. Philautus, inflamed with love of Camilla, goes to his room and pronounces a ten-minute discourse on the pangs of love, having only himself for auditor. They are amazingly patient under the verbal inflictions of one another. Euphues, angry with Philautus for having allowed himself to fall in love, takes him to task in a single speech containing four thousand words. If Lyly had set out with the end in view of constructing a story by putting into it alone 'what is not life,' his product would have been what we find it now. One could easily believe the whole affair to have been intended for a tremendous joke were it not that the tone is so serious. We are accustomed to think of youth as light-hearted: but look at a serious child, — there is nothing more serious in the world. Lyly was twenty-six years when he first published. Much of the seriousness in his romance is the burden of

twenty-six years' experience of life, a burden greater perhaps than he ever afterward carried.

Being, as we take it, an unmarried man, Lyly gives directions for managing a wife. He believes in the wholesome doctrine that a man should select his own wife. 'Made marriages by friends' are dangerous. 'I had as lief another should take measure by his back of my apparel as appoint what wife I shall have by his mind.' He prefers in a wife 'beauty before riches, and virtue before blood.' He holds to the radical English doctrine of wifely submission; there is no swerving from the position that the man is the woman's 'earthly master,'[1] but in taming a wife no violence is to be employed. Wives are to be subdued with kindness. 'If their husbands with great threatenings, with jars, with brawls, seek to make them tractable, or bend their knees, the more stiff they make them in the joints, the oftener they go about by force to rule them, the more froward they find them; but using mild words, gentle persuasions, familiar counsel, entreaty, submission, they shall not only make them to bow their knees, but to hold up their hands, not only cause them to honor them, but to stand in awe of them.' By such methods will that supremest good of an English home be brought about, namely, that the wife shall stand in awe of her husband.

[1] Lady Burton's Dedication of her husband's biography, — 'To my earthly master.' etc.

The young author admits that some wives have the domineering instinct, and that way danger lies. A man must look out for himself. If he is not to make a slave of his wife, he is also not to be too submissive; 'that will cause her to disdain thee.' Moreover, he must have an eye to the expenditure. She may keep the keys, but he will control the pocket-book. The model wife in Ecclesiastes had greater privileges; she could not only consider a piece of ground, but she could buy it if she liked it. Not so this well-trained wife of Lyly's novel. 'Let all the keys hang at her girdle, but the purse at thine, so shalt thou know what thou dost spend, and how she can spare.' But in setting forth his theory for being happy though married, Lyly, methinks, preaches a dangerous doctrine in this respect: he hints at the possibility of a man's wanting, in vulgar parlance, to go on a spree, expresses no question as to the propriety of his so doing, but says that if a man *does* let himself loose in this fashion his wife must not know it. 'Imitate the kings of Persia, who when they were given to riot kept no company with their wives, but when they used good order had their queens even at the table.' In short, the wife was to duplicate the moods of her husband. 'Thou must be a glass to thy wife, for in thy face must she see her own; for if when thou laughest she weep, when thou mournest she giggle, the one is a manifest sign

she delighteth in others, the other a token she despiseth thee.' John Lyly was a wise youth. He struck the keynote of the mode in which most incompatible marriages are played when he said that it was a bad sign if one's wife giggled when one was disposed to be melancholy.

An interesting study is the author's attitude toward foreign travel. It would appear to have been the fashion of the time to indulge in much invective against foreign travel, but nevertheless — to travel. Many men believed with young Valentine that 'home keeping youth have ever homely wits,' while others were rather of Ascham's mind when he said, 'I was once in Italy, but I thank God my stay there was only nine days.' Lyly came of a nation of travelers. Then as now it was true that there was no accessible spot of the globe upon which the Englishman had not set his foot. Nomadic England went abroad; sedentary England stayed at home to rail at him for so doing. Aside from that prejudice which declared that all foreigners were fools, there was a well-founded objection to the sort of traveling usually described as seeing the world. Young men went upon the continent to see questionable forms of pleasure, perhaps to practice them. Whether justly or not, common report named Italy as the higher school of pleasurable vices, and Naples as the city where one's doctorate was to be obtained. Gluttony and licen-

tiousness are the sins of Naples. Eubulus tells Euphues that in that city are those who 'sleep with meat in their mouths, with sin in their hearts, and with shame in their houses.' There is no limit to the inconveniences of traveling. 'Thou must have the back of an ass to bear all, and the snout of a swine to say nothing. . . . Travelers must sleep with their eyes open lest they be slain in their beds, and wake with their eyes shut lest they be suspected by their looks.' Journeys by the fireside are better. 'If thou covet to travel strange countries, search the maps, there shalt thou see much with great pleasure and small pains, if to be conversant in all courts, read histories, where thou shalt understand both what the men have been and what their manners are, and methinketh there must be much delight where there is no danger.' Perhaps Lyly intended to condemn traveling with character unformed. A boy returned with more vices than he went forth with pence, and was able to sin both by experience and authority. Lest he should be thought to speak with uncertain voice upon this matter Lyly gives Euphues a story to tell in which the chief character describes the effect of traveling upon himself. 'There was no crime so barbarous, no murder so bloody, no oath so blasphemous, no vice so execrable, but that I could readily recite where I learned it, and by rote repeat the peculiar crime of every particular country, city,

town, village, house, or chamber.' Here, indeed, is no lack of plain speech.

In the section called 'Euphues and his Ephœbus' twenty-nine pages are devoted to the question of the education of youth. It is largely taken from Plutarch. Some of the points are these: that a mother shall herself nurse her child, that the child shall be early framed to manners, 'for as the steele is imprinted in the soft waxe, so learning is engraven in ye minde of an young Impe.' He is not to hear 'fonde fables or filthy tales.' He is to learn to pronounce distinctly and to be kept from 'barbarous talk,' that is, no dialect and no slang. He is to become expert in martial affairs, in shooting and darting, and he must hunt and hawk for his 'honest recreation.' If he will not study, he is not to be 'scourged with stripes, but threatened with words, not *dulled with blows*, like servants, the which, the more they are beaten the better they bear it, and the less they care for it.' In taking this position Lyly is said to be only following Ascham. Ascham was not the first in his own time to preach such doctrine. Forty years before the publication of *The Schoolmaster*, Sir Thomas Elyot, in his book called *The Governour*, raised his voice against the barbarity of teachers 'by whom the wits of children be dulled,' — almost the very words of John Lyly.

Euphues, besides being a treatise on love

and education, is a sort of Tudor tract upon animated nature. It should be a source of joy unspeakable to the general reader if only for what it teaches him in the way of natural history. How much of what is most gravely stated here did John Lyly actually believe? It is easy to grant so orthodox a statement of physical fact as that 'the Sunne doth harden the durte, and melte the waxe;' but ere the sentence be finished, the author calls upon us to believe that 'Perfumes doth refresh the Dove and kill the Betill.' The same reckless extravagance of remark is to be noted whenever bird, beast, or reptile is mentioned. The crocodile of Shakespeare's time must have been a very contortionist among beasts, for, says Lyly, 'when one approacheth neere unto him, [he] gathereth up himselfe into the roundnesse of a ball, but running from him, stretcheth himselfe into the length of a tree.' Perhaps the fame of this creature's powers grew in the transmission of the narrative from the banks of the Nile to the banks of the Thames. The ostrich was human in its vanity according to Lyly; men and women sometimes pull out their white hairs, but 'the Estritch, that taketh the greatest pride in her feathers, picketh some of the worst out and burneth them.' Nay, more than that, being in 'great haste she pricketh none but hirselfe which causeth hir to runne when she would rest.' We shall pre-

sently expect to hear that ostriches wear boots by the straps of which they lift themselves over ten-foot woven-wire fences. But Lyly used the conventional natural history that was at hand, and troubled himself in no respect to inquire about its truth or falsity.

There is yet another cause of the popularity of this book in its own time, which has been too little emphasized. It is that trumpet blast of patriotism with which the volume ends. We feel, as we read the thirty pages devoted to the praise of England and the Queen, that this is right, fitting, artistic, and we hope that it is tolerably sincere. Flattery came easily to men in those days, and there was small hope of advancement for one who did not master the art. But there is a glow of earnestness in these paragraphs rather convincing to the skeptic. Nor would the book be complete without this eulogy. We have had everything else; a story for who wanted a story, theories upon the education of children, a body of mythological divinity, a discussion of methods of public speaking, advice for men who are about to marry, a theological sparring match, in which a man of straw is set up to be knocked down, and *is* knocked down, a thousand illustrations of wit and curious reading, and now, as a thing that all men could understand, the author tells Englishmen of their own good fortune in being Englishmen, and is finely outspoken in praise of what he calls 'the blessed Island.'

This is an old-fashioned vein, to be sure, — the *ad captandum* trick of a popular orator bent upon making a success. It is not looked upon in all places with approval. 'Our unrivaled prosperity' was a phrase which greatly irritated Matthew Arnold. Here in America, are we not taught by a highly fastidious journal that we may be patriotic if we choose, but we must be careful how we let people know it? We must n't make a fuss about it. We must n't be blatant. The star-spangled banner on the public schools is at best a cheap and vulgar expression of patriotism. But somehow even this sort of patriotism goes with the people, and perhaps these instincts of the common folk are not entirely to be despised. Many a reader of *Euphues*, who cared but little for its elaborated style, who was not moved by its orthodoxy, who did n't read books simply because they were fashionable, must have felt his pulse stirred by Lyly's chant of England's greatness. For Euphues is John Lyly, and John Lyly's creed was substantially that of the well-known hero of a now forgotten comic opera, 'I am an Englishman.'

In the thin disguise of the chief character of his story the author describes the happy island, its brave gentlemen and rich merchants, its fair ladies and its noble Queen. The glories of London, which he calls the storehouse and mart of all Europe, and the excellence of Eng-

lish universities, 'out of which do daily proceed men of great wisdom,' are alike celebrated. England's material wealth in mines and quarries is amply set forth, also the fine qualities of the breed of cattle, and the virtues of English spaniels, hounds, and mastiffs; for these constitute a sort of good that all could appreciate. He is satirical at the expense of his countrymen's dress, — 'there is nothing in England more constant than the inconstancie of attire,' — but praises their silence and gravity at their meals. They have wise ministers in the court, and devout guardians of the true religion and of the church. 'O thrice happy England, where such councilors are, where such people live, where such virtue springeth.'

In the paragraphs relating to the queen, Lyly grows positively eloquent. He praises her matchless beauty, her mercy, patience, and moderation, and emphasizes the fact of her virginity to a degree that would have satisfied the imperial votaress herself if but once she had considered her admirer's words: 'O fortunate England that hath such a Queen; ungratefull, if thou pray not for her; wicked, if thou do not love her; miserable, if thou lose her.' He calls down Heaven's blessings upon her that she may be 'triumphant in victories like the Palm tree, fruitful in her age like the Vine, in all ages prosperous, to all men gracious, in all places glorious: so that there be no end of her praise, until the end of all flesh.'

With passages such as these, this interesting book draws to a conclusion. A most singular and original book, worthy to be read, unless, indeed, the reading of these out-of-the-way volumes were found to encroach upon time belonging by right of eminent intellectual domain to Chaucer and to Shakespeare, to Spenser and to Milton. That *Euphues* is in no exact sense a novel admits of little question. It is also a brilliant illustration of how not to write English. Nevertheless it is very amusing, and its disappearance would be a misfortune, since it would eclipse the innocent gayety of many a man who loves to bask in that golden sunshine which streams from the pages of old English books.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FAIR-MINDED MAN

It is by no means necessary that one be a man of letters in order to write a good book. Some very admirable books have been written by men who gave no especial thought to literature as an art. They wrote because they were so fortunate as to find themselves in possession of ideas, and not because they had determined to become authors. Literature as such implies sophistication, and people who devote themselves to literature do so from a variety of motives. But these writers of whom I now speak have a less complex thought back of their work. They do not, for example, propose pleasure to the reader as an object in writing. Their aim is single. They recount an experience, or plead a cause. Literature with them is always a means to an end. They are like pedestrians who never look upon walking as other than a rational process for reaching a given place. It does not occur to them that walking makes for health and pleasure, and that it is also an exercise for displaying a graceful carriage, the set of the shoulders, the poise of the head.

To be sure one runs the risk of being deceived in this matter. The actress who plays the part of an unaffected young girl, for aught that the spectator knows to the contrary may be a pronounced woman of the world. Not every author who says to the public 'excuse my untaught manner' is on this account to be regarded as a literary ingénu. His simplicity awakens distrust. The fact that he professes to be a layman is a reason for suspecting him. He is probably an adept, a master of the wiles by which readers are snared.

But aside from the cases in which deception is practiced, or at least attempted, there is in the world a respectable body of literature which is not the work of literary men. Its chief characteristic is sincerity. The writers of these books are so busy in telling the truth that they have no time to think of literature.

Among the more readable of these pieces is that unpretentious volume in which Dr. Joseph Priestley relates the story of his life. For in classing this book with the writings of authors who are not men of letters one surely does not go wide of the mark. There is a sense in which it is entirely proper to say that Priestley was not a literary man. He produced twenty-five volumes of 'works,' but they were for use rather than for art. He wrote on science, on grammar, on theology, on law. He published controversial tracts: 'Did So-and-So believe

so-and-so or something quite different?' and then a discussion of the 'grounds' of this belief. He made 'rejoinders,' 'defenses,' 'animadversions,' and printed the details of his *Experiments on Different Kinds of Air.* This is distinctly uninviting. Let me propose an off-hand test by which to determine whether or no a given book is literature. *Can you imagine Charles Lamb in the act of reading that book?* If you can; it 's literature; if you can't, it is n't. I find it difficult to conceive of Charles Lamb as mentally immersed in the *Letter to an Anti-pædobaptist* or the *Doctrine of Phlogiston Established,* but it is natural to think of him turning the pages of Priestley's Memoir, reading each page with honest satisfaction and pronouncing the volume to be worthy the title of A BOOK.

It is a plain unvarnished tale and entirely innocent of those arts by the practice of which authors please their public. There is no eloquence, no rhetoric, no fine writing of any sort. The two or three really dramatic events in Priestley's career are not handled with a view to producing dramatic effect. There are places where the author might easily have become impassioned. But he did not become impassioned. Not a few paragraphs contain unwritten poems. The simple-hearted Priestley was unconscious of this, or if conscious, then too modest to make capital of it. He had never

aspired to the reputation of a clever writer, but rather of a useful one. His aim was quite as simple when he wrote the Memoir as when he wrote his various philosophical reports. He never deviated into brilliancy. He set down plain statements about events which had happened to him, and people whom he had known. Nevertheless the narrative is charming, and the reasons of its charm are in part these: —

In the first place the book belongs to that department of literature known as autobiography. Autobiography has peculiar virtues. The poorest of it is not without some flavor of life, and at its best it is transcendent. A notable value lies in its power to stimulate. This power is very marked in Priestley's case, where the self-delineated portrait is of a man who met and overcame enormous difficulties. He knew poverty and calumny, both brutal things. He had a thorn in the flesh, — for so he himself characterized that impediment in his speech which he tried more or less unsuccessfully all his life to cure. He found his scientific usefulness impaired by religious and political antagonisms. He tasted the bitterness of mob violence; his house was sacked, his philosophical instruments destroyed, his manuscripts and books scattered along the highway. But as he looked back upon these things he was not moved to impatience. There is a high serenity in his narrative as becomes a man who has

learned to distinguish between the ephemeral and the permanent elements of life.

Yet it is not impossible that autobiography of this sort has an effect the reverse of stimulating upon some people. It is pleasanter to read of heroes than to be a hero oneself. The story of conquest is inspiring, but the actual process is apt to be tedious. One's nerves are tuned to a fine energy in reading of Priestley's efforts to accomplish a given task. 'I spent the latter part of every week with Mr. Thomas, a Baptist minister, . . . who had no liberal education. Him I instructed in Hebrew, and by that means made myself a considerable proficient in that language. At the same time I learned Chaldee and Syriac and just began to read Arabic.' This seems easy in the telling, but in reality it was a long, a monotonous, an exhausting process. Think of the expenditure of hours and eyesight over barbarous alphabets and horrid grammatical details. One must needs have had a mind of leather to endure such philological and linguistic wear and tear. Priestley's mind not only cheerfully endured it but actually toughened under it. The man was never afraid of work. Take as an illustration his experience in keeping school.

He had pronounced objections to this business, and he registered his protest. But suppose the alternative is to teach school or to starve. A man will then teach school. I don't

know that this was quite the situation in which Priestley found himself, though he needed money. He may have hesitated to enter a profession which in his time required a more extensive muscular equipment than he was able to furnish. The old English schoolmasters were 'bruisers.' They had thick skins, hard heads, and solid fists. The symbols of their office were a Greek grammar and a flexible rod. They were skillful either with the book or the birch. It has taken many years to convince the world that the short road to the moods and tenses does not necessarily lie through the valley of the shadow of flogging. Perhaps Priestley objected to school-mastering because it was laborious. It was indeed laborious as he practiced it. One marvels at his endurance. His school consisted of about thirty boys, and he had a separate room for about half-a-dozen young ladies. 'Thus I was employed from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon, without any interval except one hour for dinner; and I never gave a holiday on any consideration, the red letter days excepted. Immediately after this employment in my own school-rooms I went to teach in the family of Mr. Tomkinson, an eminent attorney, . . . and here I continued until seven in the evening.' Twelve consecutive hours of teaching, less one hour for dinner! It was hardly necessary for Priestley to add that he had 'but little leisure for reading.'

He laid up no money from teaching, but like a true man of genius spent it upon books, a small air-pump, an electrical machine. By training his advanced pupils to manipulate these he 'extended the reputation' of his school. This was playing at science. Several years were yet to elapse before he should acquire fame as an original investigator.

This autobiography is valuable because it illustrates the events of a remarkable time. He who cares about the history of theological opinion, the history of chemical science, the history of liberty, will read these pages with keen interest. Priestley was active in each of these fields. Men famous for their connection with the great movements of the period were among his friends and acquaintance. He knew Franklin and Richard Price. John Canton, who was the first man in England to verify Franklin's experiments, was a friend of Priestley. So too were Smeaton the engineer, James Watt, Boulton, Josiah Wedgewood, and Erasmus Darwin. He knew Kippis, Lardner, Parr, and had met Porson and Dr. Johnson. His closest friend for many years was Theophilus Lindsey. One might also mention the great Lavoisier, Magellan the Jesuit philosopher, and a dozen other scientific, ecclesiastical, and political celebrities. The Memoir, however, is almost as remarkable for what it does not tell concerning these people as for what it does.

Priestley was not anecdotal. And he is only a little less reticent about himself than he is about others. He does indeed describe his early struggles as a dissenting minister, but the reader would like a little more expansiveness in the account of his friendships and his chemical discoveries. These discoveries were made during the time that he was minister at the Mill-hill Chapel, Leeds. Here he began the serious study of chemistry. And that without training in the science as it was then understood. At Warrington he had heard a series of chemical lectures by Dr. Turner of Liverpool, a gentleman whom Americans ought to regard with amused interest, for he was the man who congratulated his fellows in a Liverpool debating society that while they had just lost the *terra firma* of thirteen colonies in America, they had gained, under the generalship of Dr. Herschel, a *terra incognita* of much greater extent *in nubibus*. Priestley not only began his experiments without any great store of knowledge, but also without apparatus save what he devised for himself of the cheapest materials. In 1772 he published his first important scientific tract, 'a small pamphlet on the method of impregnating water with fixed air.' For this he received the Copley medal from the Royal Society. On the first of August, 1774, he discovered oxygen. Nobody in Leeds troubled particularly to inquire what this dissenting minister was about

with his vials and tubes, his mice and his plants. Priestley says that the only person who took 'much interest' was Mr. Hey, a surgeon. Mr. Hey was a 'zealous Methodist' and wrote answers to Priestley's theological papers. Arminian and Socinian were at peace if science was the theme. When Priestley departed from Leeds, Hey begged of him the 'earthen trough' in which all his experiments had been made. This earthen trough was nothing more nor less than a washtub of the sort in common local use. So independent is genius of the elaborate appliances with which talent must produce results.

The discoveries brought fame, especially upon the Continent, and led Lord Shelburne to invite Priestley to become his 'literary companion.' Dr. Price was the intermediary in effecting this arrangement. Priestley's nominal post was that of 'librarian,' and he now and then officiated as experimentalist extraordinary before Lord Shelburne's guests. The compensation was not illiberal, and the relation seems to have been as free from degrading elements as such relations can be. Priestley was not a sycophant even in the day when men of genius thought it no great sin to give flattery in exchange for dinners. It was never his habit to burn incense before the great simply because the great liked the smell of incense and were accustomed to it. On the other hand,

Shelburne appears to have treated the philosopher with kindness and delicacy, and the situation was not without difficulties for his lordship.

Among obvious advantages which Priestley derived from this residence were freedom from financial worry, time for writing and experimenting, a tour on the Continent, and the privilege of spending the winter season of each year in London.

It was during these London visits that he renewed his acquaintance with Dr. Franklin. They were members of a club of 'philosophical gentlemen' which met at stated times at the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill. There were few days upon which the Father of Pneumatic Chemistry and the Father of Electrical Science did not meet. When their talk was not of dephlogisticated air and like matters it was pretty certain to be political. The war between England and America was imminent. Franklin dreaded it. He often said to Priestley that 'if the difference should come to an open rupture, it would be a war of *ten years*, and he should not live to see the end of it.' He had no doubt as to the issue. 'The English may take all our great towns, but that will not give them possession of the country,' he used to say. Franklin's last day in England was given to Priestley. The two friends spent much of the time in reading American news-

papers, especially accounts of the reception which the Boston Port Bill met with in America, and as Franklin read the addresses to the inhabitants of Boston, from the places in the neighborhood, 'the tears trickled down his cheeks.' He wrote to Priestley from Philadelphia just a month after the battle of Lexington, briefly describing that lively episode, and mentioning his pleasant six weeks voyage with weather 'so moderate that a London wherry might have accompanied us all the way.' At the close of his letter he says: 'In coming over I made a valuable philosophical discovery, which I shall communicate to you when I can get a little time. At present I am extremely hurried.' In October of that year, 1775, Franklin wrote to Priestley about the state of affairs in America. His letter contains one passage which can hardly be hackneyed from over-quotation. Franklin wants Priestley to tell 'our dear good friend,' Dr. Price, that America is 'determined and unanimous.' 'Britain at the expense of three millions has killed 150 yankees this campaign, which is 20,000 l. a head; and at Bunker's Hill, she gained a mile of ground, all of which she lost again, by our taking post on Ploughed Hill. During the same time 60,000 children have been born in America.' From these data Dr. Price is to calculate 'the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer the whole of our territory.' Then the

letter closes with greetings 'to the club of honest whigs at the London Coffee House.'

Seven years later Franklin's heart was still faithful to the club. He writes to Priestley from France: 'I love you as much as ever, and I love all the honest souls that meet at the London Coffee House. . . . I labor for peace with more earnestness that I may again be happy in your sweet society.' Franklin thought that war was folly. In a letter to Dr. Price, he speaks of the great improvements in natural philosophy, and then says: 'There is one improvement in moral philosophy which I wish to see: the discovery of a plan that would induce and oblige nations to settle their disputes without first cutting one another's throats.'

Priestley lamented that a man of Franklin's character and influence 'should have been an unbeliever in Christianity, and also have done as much as he did to make others unbelievers.' Franklin acknowledged that he had not given much attention to the evidences of Christianity, and asked Priestley to recommend some 'treatises' on the subject 'but not of great length.' Priestley suggested certain chapters of Hartley's *Observations on Man*, and also what he himself had written on the subject in his *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion.* Franklin had promised to read whatever books his friend might advise and give his 'sentiments on them.' 'But the American war breaking out

soon after, I do not believe,' says Priestley, 'that he ever found himself sufficiently at leisure for the discussion.'

Priestley valued his own scientific reputation not a little for the weight it gave, among skeptics, to his arguments in support of his religious belief. He found that all the philosophers in Paris were unbelievers. They looked at him with mild astonishment when they learned that he was not of the same mind. They may even have thought him a phenomenon which required scientific investigation. 'As I chose on all occasions to appear as a Christian, I was told by some of them that I was the only person they had ever met with, of whose understanding they had any opinion, who professed to believe Christianity.' Priestley began to question them as to what they supposed Christianity was, and with the usual result, — they were not posted on the subject.

In 1780 Priestley went to Birmingham. In the summer of 1791 occurred that remarkable riot, perhaps the most dramatic event in the philosopher's not unpicturesque career. This storm had long been gathering, and when it broke, the principal victim of its anger was, I verily believe, more astonished than frightened. The Dissenters were making unusual efforts to have some of their civil disabilities removed. Feeling against them was especially bitter. In Birmingham this hostility was intensified by

the public discourses of Mr. Madan, 'the most respectable clergyman of the town,' says Priestley. He published 'a very inflammatory sermon . . . inveighing against the Dissenters in general, and myself in particular.' Priestley made a defense under the title of *Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Birmingham.* This produced a 'reply' from Madan, and 'other letters' from his opponent. Being a conspicuous representative of that body which was most 'obnoxious to the court' it is not surprising that Priestley should have been singled out for unwelcome honors. The feeling of intolerance was unusually strong. It was said — I don't know how truly — that at a confirmation in Birmingham tracts were distributed against Socinianism in general and Priestley in particular. Very reputable men thought they did God service in inflaming the minds of the rabble against this liberal-minded gentleman. Priestley's account of the riot in the Memoir is singularly temperate. It might even be called tame. He was quite incapable of posing, or of playing martyr to an audience of which a goodly part was sympathetic and ready to believe his sufferings as great as he chose to make them appear. One could forgive a slight outburst of indignation had the doctor chosen so to relieve himself. 'On occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of the French revolution, on July 14, 1791, by several of my

friends, but with which I had little to do, a mob, encouraged by some persons in power, first burned the meeting-house in which I preached, then another meeting-house in the town, and then my dwelling-house, demolishing my library, apparatus, and as far as they could everything belonging to me. . . . Being in some personal danger on this occasion I went to London.'

A much livelier account from Priestley's own hand and written the next day after the riot is found in a letter to Theophilus Lindsay. 'The company were hardly gone from the inn before a drunken mob rushed into the house and broke all the windows. They then set fire to our meeting-house and it is burned to the ground. After that they gutted, and some say burned the old meeting. In the mean time some friends came to tell me that I and my house were threatened, and another brought a chaise to convey me and my wife away. I had not presence of mind to take even my MSS.; and after we were gone the mob came and demolished everything, household goods, library, and apparatus.' The letter differs from the Memoir in saying that 'happily no fire could be got.' Priestley afterwards heard that 'much pains was taken, but without effect, to get fire from my large electrical machine which stood in the Library.'

It is rather a curious fact that Priestley was not at the inn where the anniversary was cele-

brating. While the company there were chanting the praises of liberty he was at home playing backgammon with his wife, a remarkably innocent and untreasonable occupation. Mr. Arthur Young visited the scene of the riot a few days later and had thoughts upon it. 'Seeing, as I passed, a house in ruins, on inquiry I found that it was Dr. Priestley's. I alighted from my horse, and walked over the ruins of that laboratory which I had left home with the expectation of reaping instruction in; of that laboratory, the labours of which have not only illuminated mankind but enlarged the sphere of science itself; which has carried its master's fame to the remotest corner of the civilized world; and will now with equal celerity convey the infamy of its destruction to the disgrace of the age and the scandal of the British name.' It is not necessary to supplement Arthur Young's burst of indignation with private bursts of our own. We can afford to be as philosophic over the matter as Priestley was. That feeling was hot against him even in London is manifest from the fact that the day after his arrival a hand-bill was distributed beginning with the words: 'Dr. Priestley is a damned rascal, an enemy both to the religious and political constitution of this country, a fellow of a treasonable mind, consequently a bad Christian.' The 'bad Christian' thought it showed 'no small degree of courage' in Mr. William

Vaughan to receive him into his house. 'But it showed more in Dr. Price's congregation at Hackney to invite me to succeed him.' The invitation was not unanimous, as Priestley with his characteristic passion for exactness is at pains to tell the reader. Some of the members withdrew, 'which was not undesirable.'

People generally looked askance at him. If he was upon one side of the street the respectable part of the world made it convenient to pass by on the other side. He even found his relations with his philosophical acquaintance 'much restricted.' 'Most of the members of the Royal Society shunned him,' he says. This seems amusing and unfortunate. Apparently one's qualifications as a scientist were of little avail if one happened to hold heterodox views on the Trinity, or were of opinion that more liberty than Englishmen then had would be good for them. Priestley resigned his fellowship in the Royal Society.

One does not need even mildly to anathematize the instigators of that historic riot. They were unquestionably zealous for what they believed to be the truth. Moreover, as William Hutton observed at the time, 'It 's the right of every Englishman to walk in darkness if he chooses.' The method employed defeated its own end. Persecution is an unsafe investment and at best pays a low rate of interest. No dignified person can afford to indulge in it.

There 's the danger of being held up to the laughter of posterity. It has happened so many times that the unpopular cause has become popular. This ought to teach zealots to be cautious. What would Madan have thought if he could have been told that within thirty years one of his own coadjutors in this affair would have publicly expressed regret for the share he had in it? Madan has his reward, three quarters of a column in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But to-day Priestley's statue stands in a public square of Birmingham opposite the Council House. Thus do matters get themselves readjusted in this very interesting world.

Rutt's Life of Priestley (that remarkable illustration of how to make a very poor book out of the best materials) contains a selection of the addresses and letters of condolence which were forthcoming at this time. Some of them are stilted and dull, but they are actual 'documents,' and the words in them are alive with the passion of that day. They make the transaction very real and close at hand.

Priestley was comparatively at ease in his new home. Yet he could not entirely escape punishment. There were 'a few personal insults from the lowest of the rabble.' Anxiety was felt lest he might again receive the attentions of a mob. He humorously remarked : 'On the 14th of July, 1792, it was taken for granted

by many of my neighbors that my house was to come down just as at Birmingham the year before.' The house did not come down, but its occupant grew ill at ease, and within another two years he had found a new home in the new nation across the sea.

It is hardly exact to say that he was 'driven' from England, as some accounts of his life have it. Mere personal unpopularity would not have sufficed for this. But at sixty-one a man has n't as much fight in him as at forty-five. He is not averse to quiet. Priestley's three sons were going to America because their father thought that they could not be 'placed' to advantage in a country so 'bigoted' as their native land was then. 'My own situation, if not hazardous, was become unpleasant, so that I thought my removal would be of more service to the cause of truth than my longer stay in England.'

The sons went first and laid the foundations of the home in Northumberland, Pennsylvania. The word 'Susquehanna' had a magic sound to Englishmen. On March 30, 1794, Priestley delivered his farewell discourse. April 6 he passed with his friends the Lindsays in Essex Street, and a day later went to Gravesend. For the details of the journey one must go to his correspondence.

His last letters were written from Deal and Falmouth, April 9 and 11. The vessel was

six weeks in making the passage. The weather was bad and the travelers experienced everything 'but shipwreck and famine.' There was no lack of entertainment, for the ocean was fantastic and spectacular. Not alone were there the usual exhibitions of flying-fish, whales, porpoises, and sharks, but also 'mountains of ice larger than the captain had ever seen before,' — for thus early had transatlantic captains learned the art of pronouncing upon the exceptional character of a particular voyage for the benefit of the traveler who is making that voyage. They saw water-spouts, 'four at one time.' The billows were 'mountain-high, and at night appeared to be all on fire.' They had infinite leisure, and scarcely knew how to use it. Mrs. Priestley wrote 'thirty-two large pages of paper.' The doctor read 'the whole of the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible as far as the first book of Samuel.' He also read through Hartley's second volume, and 'for amusement several books of voyages and Ovid's Metamorphoses.' 'If I had [had] a Virgil I should have read him through, too. I read a great deal of Buchanan's poems, and some of Petrarch's *de remediis*, and Erasmus's Dialogues; also Peter Pindar's poems, . . . which pleased me much more than I expected. He is Paine in verse.'

On June 1 the ship reached Sandy Hook. Three days later Dr. and Mrs. Priestley 'landed

at the Battery in as private a manner as possible, and went immediately to Mrs. Loring's lodging-house close by.' The next morning the principal inhabitants of New York came to pay their respects and congratulations; among others Governor Clinton, Dr. Prevoost, bishop of New York; Mr. Osgood, late envoy to Great Britain; the heads of the college; most of the principal merchants, and many others; for an account of which amenities one must read Henry Wansey's *Excursion to the United States in the Summer of 1794*, published by Salisbury in 1796, a most amusing and delectable volume.

Priestley missed seeing Vice-president John Adams by one day. Adams had sailed for Boston on the third. But he left word that Boston was 'better calculated' for Priestley than any other part of America, and that 'he would find himself very well received if he should be inclined to settle there.'

Mrs. Priestley in a letter home says: 'Dr. P. is wonderfully pleased with everything, and indeed I think he has great reason from the attentions paid him.' The good people became almost frivolous with their dinner-parties, receptions, calls, and so forth. Then there were the usual addresses from the various organizations, — one from the Tammany Society, who described themselves as 'a numerous body of freemen, who associate to cultivate among them the love of liberty, and the enjoyment of

the happy republican government under which they live.' There was an address from the 'Democratic Society,' one from the 'Associated Teachers in the City of New York,' one from the 'Republican Natives of Great Britain and Ireland,' one from the 'Medical Society.'

The pleasure was not unmixed. Dr. Priestley the theologian had a less cordial reception than Dr. Priestley the philosopher and martyr. The orthodox were considerably disturbed by his coming. 'Nobody asks me to preach, and I hear there is much jealousy and dread of me.' In Philadelphia at a Baptist meeting the minister bade his people beware, for 'a Priestley had entered the land.' But the heretic was very patient and earnest to do what he might for the cause of 'rational' Christianity. The widespread infidelity distressed him. He mentioned it as a thing to be wondered at that in America the lawyers were almost universally unbelievers. He lost no time in getting to work. On August 27, when he had been settled in Northumberland only a month, he wrote to a friend that he had just got Paine's *Age of Reason*, and thought to answer it. By September 14 he had done so. 'I have transcribed for the press my answer to Mr. Paine, whose work is the weakest and most absurd as well as most arrogant of anything I have yet seen.'

Priestley was fully conscious of the humor of his situation. He was trying to save the pub-

lic, including lawyers, from the mentally debilitating effects of reading Paine's *Age of Reason*, while at the same time all the orthodox divines were warning their flocks of the danger consequent upon having anything to do with *him*.

Honors and rumors of honors came to him. He was talked of for the presidency of colleges yet to be founded, and was invited to professorships in colleges that actually were. He went occasionally to Philadelphia, a frightful journey from Northumberland in those days. Through his influence a Unitarian society was established. He gave public discourses, and there was considerable curiosity to see and hear so famous a man. 'I have the use of Mr. Winchester's pulpit every morning . . . and yesterday preached my first sermon.' He was told that 'a great proportion of the members of Congress were present,' and we know that 'Mr. Vice-President Adams was a regular attendant.'

In company with his friend Mr. Russell, Priestley went to take tea with President Washington. They stayed two hours 'as in any private family,' and at leavetaking were invited 'to come at any time without ceremony.'

About a year later Priestley saw again Washington, who had finished his second term of office. 'I went to take leave of the late president. He seemed not to be in very good spirits. He invited me to Mt. Vernon, and said he

thought he should hardly go from home twenty miles as long as he lived.'

Priestley was not to have the full measure of the rest which he coveted. He had left England to escape persecution, and persecution followed him. Cobbett, who had assailed him in a scurrilous pamphlet at the time of his emigration, continued his attacks. Priestley was objectionable because he was a friend of France. Moreover he had opinions about things, some of which he freely expressed, — a habit he had contracted so early in life as to render it hopeless that he should ever break himself of it. Cobbett's virulence was so great as to excite the astonishment of Mr. Adams, who said to Priestley, 'I wonder why the man abuses you;' when a hint from Adams, Priestley thought, would have prevented it all. But it was not easy to control William Cobbett. Adams may have thought that Cobbett was a being created for the express purpose of being let alone. There are such beings. Every one knows, or can guess, to what sort of animal Churton Collins compared Dean Swift, when the Dean was in certain moods. William Cobbett, too, had his moods.

Yet it is impossible to read Priestley's letters between 1798 and 1801 without indignation against those who preyed upon his peace of mind. He writes to Lindsay: 'It is nothing but a firm faith in a good Providence that is

my support at present: but it is an effectual one.' His 'never failing resource' was the 'daily study of the Scriptures.' In moments of depression he loved to read the introduction to Hartley's second volume, those noble passages beginning: 'Whatever be our doubts, fears, or anxieties, whether selfish or social, whether for time or eternity, our only hope and refuge must be in the infinite power, knowledge and goodness of God.'

Priestley was indeed a remarkable man. His services to science were very great. He laid the foundations of notable structures which, however, other men were to rear. He might have been a greater man had he been less versatile. And yet his versatility was one source of his greatness. He clung to old-fashioned notions, defending the doctrine of 'philogiston' after it had been abandoned by nearly every other chemist of repute. For this he has been ridiculed. But he was not ridiculous, he was singularly open-minded. He knew that his reputation as a philosopher was under a cloud. 'Though all the world is at present against me, I see no reason to despair of the old system; and yet, *if I should see reason to change my opinion, I think I should rather feel a pride in making the most public acknowledgment of it.*' These are words which Professor Huxley might well have quoted in his beautiful address on Priestley delivered at Birmingham, for they are

the perfect expression and symbol of the fair-minded man.

He was as modest as he was fair-minded. When it was proposed that he should accompany Captain Cook's expedition to the South Seas, and the arrangements were really completed, he was objected to because of his political and religious opinions. Dr. Reinhold Foster was appointed in his stead. He was a person 'far better qualified,' said Priestley. Again when he was invited to take the chair of Chemistry at Philadelphia he refused. This for several reasons, the chief of which was that he did not believe himself fitted for it. One would naturally suppose that the inventor of soda-water and the discoverer of oxygen would have been able to give lectures to young men on chemistry. But Priestley believed that he 'could not have acquitted himself in it to proper advantage.' 'Though I have made discoveries in some branches of chemistry, I never gave much attention to the common routine of it, and know but little of the common processes.'

Priestley still awaits a biographer. The two thick volumes compiled by Rutt more than sixty-three years ago have not been reprinted, nor are they likely to be. But a life so precious in its lessons should be recorded in just terms. It would be an inspiring book, and its title might well be 'The Story of a Man of Character.' Not the least of its virtues would consist

in ample recognition of Joseph Priestley's unwavering confidence that all things were ordered for the best; and then of his piety, which prompted him to say, as he looked back upon his life: 'I am thankful to that good Providence which always took more care of me than ever I took of myself.'

CONCERNING A RED WAISTCOAT

HERO-WORSHIP is appropriate only to youth. With age one becomes cynical, or indifferent, or perhaps too busy. Either the sense of the marvelous is dulled, or one's boys are just entering college and life is agreeably practical. Marriage and family cares are good if only for the reason that they keep a man from getting bored. But they also stifle his yearnings after the ideal. They make hero-worship appear foolish. How can a man go mooning about when he has just had a good cup of coffee and a snatch of what purports to be the news, while an attractive and well-dressed woman sits opposite him at breakfast-table, and by her mere presence, to say nothing of her wit, compels him to be respectable and to carry a level head? The father of a family and husband of a federated club woman has no business with hero-worship. Let him leave such folly to beardless youth.

But if a man has never outgrown the boy that was in him, or has never married, then may he do this thing. He will be happy himself, and others will be happy as they consider

him. Indeed, there is something altogether charming about the personality of him who proves faithful to his early loves in literature and art; who continues a graceful hero-worship through all the caprices of literary fortune; and who, even though his idol may have been dethroned, sets up a private shrine at which he pays his devotions, unmindful of the crowd which hurries by on its way to do homage to strange gods.

Some men are born to be hero-worshipers. Théophile Gautier is an example. If one did not love Gautier for his wit and his good-nature, one would certainly love him because he dared to be sentimental. He displayed an almost comic excess of emotion at his first meeting with Victor Hugo. Gautier smiles as he tells the story; but he tells it exactly, not being afraid of ridicule. He went to call upon Hugo with his friends Gérard de Nerval and Pétrus Borel. Twice he mounted the staircase leading to the poet's door. His feet dragged as if they had been shod with lead instead of leather. His heart throbbed; cold sweat moistened his brow. As he was on the point of ringing the bell, an idiotic terror seized him, and he fled down the stairs, four steps at a time, Gérard and Pétrus after him, shouting with laughter. But the third attempt was successful. Gautier saw Victor Hugo — and lived. The author of *Odes et Ballades* was

just twenty-eight years old. Youth worshiped youth in those great days.

Gautier said little during that visit, but he stared at the poet with all his might. He explained afterwards that one may look at gods, kings, pretty women, and great poets rather more scrutinizingly than at other persons, and this too without annoying them. 'We gazed at Hugo with admiring intensity, but he did not appear to be inconvenienced.'

What brings Gautier especially to mind is the appearance within a few weeks of an amusing little volume entitled *Le Romantisme et l'éditeur Renduel.* Its chief value consists, no doubt, in what the author, M. Adolphe Jullien, has to say about Renduel. That noted publisher must have been a man of unusual gifts and unusual fortune. He was a fortunate man because he had the luck to publish some of the best works of Victor Hugo, Sainte-Beuve, Théophile Gautier, Alfred de Musset, Gérard de Nerval, Charles Nodier, and Paul Lacroix; and he was a gifted man because he was able successfully to manage his troop of geniuses, neither quarreling with them himself nor allowing them to quarrel overmuch with one another. Renduel's portrait faces the title-page of the volume, and there are two portraits of him besides. There are fac-similes of agreements between the great publisher and his geniuses. There is a famous caricature of Victor Hugo

with a brow truly monumental. There is a caricature of Alfred de Musset with a figure like a Regency dandy, — a figure which could have been acquired only by much patience and unremitted tight-lacing; also one of Balzac, which shows that that great novelist's waist-line had long since disappeared, and that he had long since ceased to care. What was a figure to him in comparison with the flesh-pots of Paris!

One of the best of these pictorial satires is Roubaud's sketch of Gautier. It has a teasing quality, it is diabolically fascinating. It shows how great an art caricature is in the hands of a master.

But the highest virtue of a good new book is that it usually sends the reader back to a good old book. One can hardly spend much time upon Renduel; he will remember that Gautier has described that period when hero-worship was in the air, when the sap of a new life circulated everywhere, and when he himself was one of many loyal and enthusiastic youths who bowed the head at mention of Victor Hugo's name. The reader will remember, too, that Gautier was conspicuous in that band of Romanticists who helped to make *Hernani* a success the night of its first presentation. Gautier believed that to be the great event of his life. He loved to talk about it, dream about it, write of it.

There was a world of good fellowship among

the young artists, sculptors, and poets of that day. They took real pleasure in shouting Hosanna to Victor Hugo and to one another. Even Zola, the Unsentimental, speaks of *ma tristesse* as he reviews that delightful past. He cannot remember it, to be sure, but he has read about it. He thinks ill of the present as he compares the present with 'those dead years.' Writers then belonged to a sort of heroic brotherhood. They went out like soldiers to conquer their literary liberties. They were kings of the Paris streets. 'But we,' says Zola in a pensive strain, 'we live like wolves each in his hole.' I do not know how true a description this is of modern French literary society, but it is not difficult to make one's self think that those other days were the days of magnificent friendships between young men of genius. It certainly was a more brilliant time than ours. It was flamboyant, to use one of Gautier's favorite words.

Youth was responsible for much of the enthusiasm which obtained among the champions of artistic liberty. These young men who did honor to the name of Hugo were actually young. They rejoiced in their youth. They flaunted it, so to speak, in the faces of those who were without it. Gautier says that young men of that day differed in one respect from young men of this day; modern young men are generally in the neighborhood of fifty years of age.

Gautier has described his friends and comrades most felicitously. All were boys, and all were clever. They were poor and they were happy. They swore by Scott and Shakespeare, and they planned great futures for themselves.

Take for an example Jules Vabre, who owed his reputation to a certain Essay on the Inconvenience of Conveniences. You will search the libraries in vain for this treatise. The author did not finish it. He did not even commence it, — only talked about it. Jules Vabre had a passion for Shakespeare, and wanted to translate him. He thought of Shakespeare by day and dreamed of Shakespeare by night. He stopped people in the street to ask them if they had read Shakespeare.

He had a curious theory concerning language. Jules Vabre would not have said, As a man thinks so is he, but, As a man drinks so is he. According to Gautier's statement, Vabre maintained the paradox that the Latin languages needed to be 'watered' (*arroser*) with wine, and the Anglo-Saxon languages with beer. Vabre found that he made extraordinary progress in English upon stout and extra stout. He went over to England to get the very atmosphere of Shakespeare. There he continued for some time regularly 'watering' his language with English ale, and nourishing his body with English beef. He would not look at a French newspaper, nor would he even read a letter

from home. Finally he came back to Paris, anglicized to his very galoshes. Gautier says that when they met, Vabre gave him a 'shake hand' almost energetic enough to pull the arm from the shoulder. He spoke with so strong an English accent that it was difficult to understand him; Vabre had almost forgotten his mother tongue. Gautier congratulated the exile upon his return, and said, 'My dear Jules Vabre, in order to translate Shakespeare it is now only necessary for you to learn French.'

Gautier laid the foundations of his great fame by wearing a red waistcoat the first night of *Hernani*. All the young men were fantastic in those days, and the spirit of carnival was in the whole romantic movement. Gautier was more courageously fantastic than other young men. His costume was effective, and the public never forgot him. He says with humorous resignation: 'If you pronounce the name of Théophile Gautier before a Philistine who has never read a line of our works, the Philistine knows us, and remarks with a satisfied air, "Oh yes, the young man with the red waistcoat and the long hair." . . . Our poems are forgotten, but our red waistcoat is remembered.' Gautier cheerfully grants that when everything about him has faded into oblivion this gleam of light will remain, to distinguish him from literary contemporaries whose waistcoats were of soberer hue.

The chapter in his *Histoire du Romantisme* in which Gautier tells how he went to the tailor to arrange for the most spectacular feature of his costume is lively and amusing. He spread out the magnificent piece of cherry-colored satin, and then unfolded his design for a 'pourpoint,' like a 'Milan cuirass.' Says Gautier, using always his quaint editorial *we*, 'It has been said that we know a great many words, but we don't know words enough to express the astonishment of our tailor when we lay before him our plan for a waistcoat.' The man of shears had doubts as to his customer's sanity.

'Monsieur,' he exclaimed, 'this is not the fashion!'

'It will be the fashion when we have worn the waistcoat once,' was Gautier's reply. And he declares that he delivered the answer with a self-possession worthy of a Brummel or 'any other celebrity of dandyism.'

It is no part of this paper to describe the innocently absurd and good-naturedly extravagant things which Gautier and his companions did, not alone the first night of *Hernani*, but at all times and in all places. They unquestionably saw to it that Victor Hugo had fair play the evening of February 25, 1830. The occasion was an historic one, and they with their Merovingian hair, their beards, their waistcoats, and their enthusiasm helped to make it an unusually lively and picturesque occasion.

I have quoted a very few of the good things which one may read in Gautier's *Histoire du Romantisme*. The narrative is one of much sweetness and humor. It ought to be translated for the benefit of readers who know Gautier chiefly by *Mademoiselle de Maupin* and that for reasons among which love of literature is perhaps the least influential.

It is pleasant to find that Renduel confirms the popular view of Gautier's character. M. Jullien says that Renduel never spoke of Gautier but in praise. 'Quel bon garçon!' he used to say. 'Quel brave cœur!' M. Jullien has naturally no large number of new facts to give concerning Gautier. But there are eight or nine letters from Gautier to Renduel which will be read with pleasure, especially the one in which the poet says to the publisher, 'Heaven preserve you from historical novels, and your eldest child from the smallpox.'

Gautier must have been both generous and modest. No mere egoist could have been so faithful in his hero-worship or so unpretentious in his allusions to himself. One has only to read the most superficial accounts of French literature to learn how universally it is granted that Gautier had skillful command of that language to which he was born. Yet he himself was by no means sure that he deserved a master's degree. He quotes one of Goethe's sayings, — a saying in which the great German

poet declares that after the practice of many arts there was but one art in which he could be said to excel, namely, the art of writing in German; in that he was almost a master. Then Gautier exclaims, 'Would that *we*, after so many years of labor, had become almost a master of the art of writing in French! But such ambitions are not for us!'

Yet they were for him; and it is a satisfaction to note how invariably he is accounted, by the artists in literature, an eminent man among many eminent men in whose touch language was plastic.

STEVENSON: THE VAGABOND AND THE PHILOSOPHER

A CERTAIN critic said of Stevenson that he was 'incurably literary;' the phrase is a good one, being both humorous and true. There is comfort in the thought that such efforts as may have been made to keep him in the path of virtuous respectability failed. Rather than *do* anything Stevenson preferred to loaf and to write books. And he early learned that considerable loafing is necessary if one expects to become a writer. There is a sense in which it is true that only lazy people are fit for literature. Nothing is so fruitful as a fine gift for idleness. The most prolific writers have been people who seemed to have nothing to do. Every one has read that description of George Sand in her latter years, 'an old lady who came out into the garden at mid-day in a broad-brimmed hat and sat down on a bench or wandered slowly about. So she remained for hours looking about her, musing, contemplating. She was gathering impressions, absorbing the universe, steeping herself in Nature; and at night she would give all this forth as a sort of emana-

tion.' One shudders to think what the result might have been if instead of absorbing the universe George Sand had done something practical during those hours. But the Scotchman was not like George Sand in any particular that I know of save in his perfect willingness to bask in the sunshine and steep himself in Nature. His books did not 'emanate.' The one way in which he certainly did not produce literature was by improvisation. George Sand never revised her work; it might almost be said that Robert Louis Stevenson never did anything else.

Of his method we know this much. He himself has said that when he went for a walk he usually carried two books in his pocket, one a book to read, the other a note-book in which to put down the ideas that came to him. This remark has undoubtedly been seized upon and treasured in the memory as embodying a secret of his success. Trusting young souls have begun to walk about with note-books: only to learn that the note-book was a detail, not an essential, in the process.

He who writes while he walks cannot write very much, but he may, if he chooses, write very well. He may turn over the rubbish of his vocabulary until he finds some exquisite and perfect word with which to bring out his meaning. This word need not be unusual; and if it is 'exquisite' then exquisite only in the sense

of being fitted with rare exactness to the idea. Stevenson wrote so well in part because he wrote so deliberately. He knew the vulgarity of haste, especially in the making of literature. He knew that finish counted for much, perhaps for half. Has he not been reported as saying that it was n't worth a man's while to attempt to be a writer unless he was quite willing to spend a day if the need were, on the turn of a single sentence? In general this means the sacrifice of earthly reward; it means that a man must work for love and let the ravens feed him. That scriptural source has been distinctly unfruitful in these latter days, and few authors are willing to take a prophet's chances. But Stevenson was one of the few.

He laid the foundations of his reputation with two little volumes of travel. *An Inland Voyage* appeared in 1878; *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, in 1879. These books are not dry chronicles of drier facts. They bear much the same relation to conventional accounts of travel that flowers growing in a garden bear to dried plants in a herbarium. They are the most friendly and urbane things in modern English literature. They have been likened to Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. The criticism would be better if one were able to imagine Stevenson writing the adventure of the *fille de chambre*, or could conceive of Lawrence Sterne writing the account of the meeting with

the Plymouth Brother. 'And if ever at length, out of our separate and sad ways, we should all come together into one common-house, I have a hope to which I cling dearly, that my mountain Plymouth Brother will hasten to shake hands with me again.' That was written twenty years ago and the Brother was an old man then. And now Stevenson is gone. How impossible it is not to wonder whether they have yet met in that 'one common-house.' 'He feared to intrude, but he would not willingly forego one moment of my society; and he seemed never weary of shaking me by the hand.'

The *Inland Voyage* contains passages hardly to be matched for beauty. Let him who would be convinced read the description of the forest Mormal, that forest whose breath was perfumed with nothing less delicate than sweet brier. 'I wish our way had always lain among woods,' says Stevenson. 'Trees are the most civil society.'

Stevenson's traveling companion was a young English baronet. The two adventurers paddled in canoes through the pleasant rivers and canals of Belgium and North France. They had plenty of rain and a variety of small misadventures; but they also had sunshine, fresh air, and experiences among the people of the country such as they could have got in no other way. They excited not a little wonder, and

the common opinion was that they were doing the journey for a wager; there seemed to be no other reason why two respectable gentlemen, not poor, should work so hard and get so wet.

This was conceived in a more adventurous vein than appears at first sight. In an unsubdued country one contends with beasts and men who are openly hostile. But when one is a stranger in the midst of civilization and meets civilization at its back door, he is astonished to find how little removed civilization is from downright savagery. Stevenson and his companion learned as they could not have learned otherwise how great deference the world pays to clothes. Whether your heart is all right turns out a matter of minor importance; but—*are your clothes all right?* If so, smiles, and good beds at respectable inns; if not, a lodging in a cow-shed or beneath any poor roof which suffices to keep off the rain. The voyagers had constantly to meet the accusation of being peddlers. They denied it and were suspected afresh while the denial was on their lips. The public mind was singularly alert and critical on the subject of peddlers.

At La Fere, 'of Cursed Memory,' they had a rebuff which nearly spoiled their tempers. They arrived in a rain. It was the finest kind of a night to be indoors 'and hear the rain upon the windows.' They were told of a famous

inn. When they reached the carriage entry 'the rattle of many dishes fell upon their ears.' They sighted a great field of snowy table-cloth, the kitchen glowed like a forge. They made their triumphal entry, 'a pair of damp rag-and-bone men, each with a limp India-rubber bag upon his arm.' Stevenson declares that he never had a sound view of that kitchen. It seemed to him a culinary paradise 'crowded with the snowy caps of cookmen, who all turned round from their sauce-pans and looked at us with surprise.' But the landlady — a flushed, angry woman full of affairs — there was no mistaking her. They asked for beds and were told to find beds in the suburbs: 'We are too busy for the like of you!' They said they would dine then, and were for putting down their luggage. The landlady made a run at them and stamped her foot: 'Out with you — out of the door,' she screeched.

I once heard a young Englishman who had been drawn into some altercation at a continental hotel explain a discreet movement on his own part by saying: 'Now a French cook running amuck with a carving knife in his hand would have bean a nahsty thing to meet, you know.' There were no knives in this case, only a woman's tongue. Stevenson says that he does n't know how it happened, 'but next moment we were out in the rain, and I was cursing before the carriage entry like a disappointed mendicant.'

'It 's all very fine to talk about tramps and morality. Six hours of police surveillance (such as I have had) or one brutal rejection from an inn door change your views upon the subject, like a course of lectures. As long as you keep in the upper regions, with all the world bowing to you as you go, social arrangements have a very handsome air; but once get under the wheels and you wish society were at the devil. I will give most respectable men a fortnight of such a life, and then I will offer them twopence for what remains of their morality.'

Stevenson declares that he could have set the temple of Diana on fire that night if it had been handy. 'There was no crime complete enough to express my disapproval of human institutions.' As for the baronet, he was horrified to learn that he had been taken for a peddler again; and he registered a vow before Heaven never to be uncivil to a peddler. But before making that vow he particularized a complaint for every joint in the landlady's body.

To read *An Inland Voyage* is to be impressed anew with the thought that some men are born with a taste for vagabondage. They are instinctively for being on the move. Like the author of that book they travel 'not to go any where but to go.' If they behold a stage-coach or a railway train in motion they heartily wish

themselves aboard. They are homesick when they stop at home, and are only at home when they are on the move. Talk to them of foreign lands and they are seized with unspeakable heart-ache and longing. Stevenson met an omnibus driver in a Belgian village who looked at him with thirsty eyes because he was able to travel. How that omnibus driver 'longed to be somewhere else and see the round world before he died.' 'Here I am,' said he. 'I drive to the station. Well. And then I drive back again to the hotel. And so on every day and all the week round. My God, is that life?' Stevenson opined that this man had in him the making of a traveler of the right sort; he might have gone to Africa or to the Indies after Drake. 'But it is an evil age for the gipsily inclined among men. He who can sit squarest on a three-legged stool, he it is who has the wealth and glory.'

In his *Travels with a Donkey* the author had no companionship but such as the donkey afforded; and to tell the truth this companionship was almost human at times. He learned to love the quaint little beast which shared his food and his trials. 'My lady-friend' he calls her. Modestine was her name; 'she was patient, elegant in form, the color of an ideal mouse and inimitably small.' She gave him trouble, and at times he felt hurt and was distant in manner towards her. Modestine car-

ried the luggage. She may not have known that R. L. Stevenson wrote books, but she knew as by instinct that R. L. Stevenson had never driven a donkey. She wrought her will with him, that is, she took her own gait. 'What that pace was there is no word mean enough to describe; it was something as much slower than a walk as a walk is slower than a run.' He must belabor her incessantly. It was an ignoble toil, and he felt ashamed of himself besides, for he remembered her sex. 'The sound of my own blows sickened me. Once when I looked at her she had a faint resemblance to a lady of my acquaintance who had formerly loaded me with kindness; and this increased my horror of my cruelty.'

From time to time Modestine's load would topple off. The villagers were delighted with this exhibition and laughed appreciatively. 'Judge if I was hot!' says Stevenson. 'I remembered having laughed myself when I had seen good men struggling with adversity in the person of a jack-ass, and the recollection filled me with penitence. That was in my old light days before this trouble came upon me.'

He had a sleeping-bag, waterproof without, blue sheep's wool within, and in this portable house he passed his nights afield. Not always by choice, as witness his chapter entitled 'A Camp in the Dark.' There are two or three pages in that chapter which come pretty near

to perfection, — if there be such a thing as perfection in literature. I don't know who could wish for anything better than the paragraphs in which Stevenson describes falling asleep in the tempest, and awaking next morning to see the 'world flooded with a blue light, the mother of dawn.' He had been in search of an adventure all his life, 'a pure dispassionate adventure, such as befell early and heroic voyagers,' and he thinks that he realized a fraction of his day-dreams when that morning found him, an inland castaway, 'as strange to his surroundings as the first man upon the earth.'

Passages like these indicate Stevenson's quality. He was no carpet-knight; he had the true adventurer's blood in his veins. He and Drake and the Belgian omnibus-driver should have gone to the Indies together. Better still, the omnibus driver should have gone with Drake, and Stevenson should have gone with Amyas Leigh. They say that Stevenson traveled in search of health. Without doubt; but think how he *would* have traveled if he had had good health. And one has strange mental experiences alone with the stars. That came of sleeping in the fields 'where God keeps an open house.' 'I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists.'

Much as he gloried in his solitude he 'became aware of a strange lack;' for he was

human. And he gave it as his opinion that 'to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.' It may be so. Such a woman would need to be of heroic physical mould, and there is danger that she would turn out of masculine mould as well. Isopel Berners was of such sort. Isopel could handle her clenched fists like a prize-fighter. She was magnificent in the forest, and never so perfectly in place as when she backed up George Borrow in his fight with the Flaming Tinman. Having been in the habit of taking her own part, she was able to give pertinent advice at a critical moment. 'It 's of no use flipping at the Flaming Tinman with your left hand,' she said, 'why don't you use your right?' Isopel called Borrow's right arm 'Long Melford.' And when the Flaming Tinman got his knock-down blow from Borrow's right, Isopel exclaimed, 'Hurrah for Long Melford; there is nothing like Long Melford for shortness all the world over!'

But what an embarrassing personage Miss Berners would have been transferred from the dingle to the drawing-room; nay, how impossible it is to think of that athletic young goddess as *Miss* Berners! The distinctions and titles of conventional society refuse to cling even to her name. I wonder how Stevenson would have liked Isopel Berners.

And now his philosophy. Yet somehow

'philosophy' seems a big word for so unpretentious a theory of life as his. Stevenson did n't philosophize much; he was content to live and to enjoy. He was deliberate, and in general he would not suffer himself to be driven. He resembled an admirable lady of my acquaintance who, when urged to get something done by a given time, usually replied that 'time was made for slaves.' Stevenson had the same feeling. He says: 'Hurry is the resource of the faithless. When a man can trust his own heart and those of his friends to-morrow is as good as to-day. And if he die in the mean while, why, then, there he dies, and the question is solved.'

You think this a poor philosophy? But there must be all kinds of philosophy; the people in the world are not run into one mould like so much candle-grease. And because of this, his doctrine of Inaction and Postponement, stern men and practical women have frowned upon Stevenson. In their opinion instead of being up and doing he consecrated too many hours to the idleness of literature. They feel towards him as Hawthorne fancied his ancestor the great witch judge would have felt towards *him*. Hawthorne imagines that ghostly and terrible ancestor looking down upon him and exclaiming with infinite scorn, 'A writer of story-books. What kind of employment is that for an immortal soul?'

To many people nothing is more hateful than this willingness to hold aloof and let things drift. That any human being should acquiesce with the present order of the world appears monstrous to these earnest souls. An Indian critic once called Stevenson 'a faddling Hedonist.' Stevenson quotes the phrase with obvious amusement and without attempting to gainsay its accuracy.

But if he allowed the world to take its course he expected the same privilege. He wished neither to interfere nor to be interfered with. And he was a most cheerful nonconformist withal. He says: 'To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer is to have kept your soul alive.' Independence and optimism are vital parts of his unformulated creed. He hated cynicism and sourness. He believed in praise of one's own good estate. He thought it was an inspiriting thing to hear a man boast, — 'so long as he boasts of what he really has.' If people but knew this they would boast 'more freely and with a better grace.'

Stevenson was humorously alive to the old-fashioned quality of his doctrine of happiness and content. He says in the preface to an *Inland Voyage* that although the book 'runs to considerably over a hundred pages, it contains not a single reference to the imbecility of God's universe, nor so much as a single hint that I

could have made a better one myself — I really do not know where my head can have been.' But while this omission will, he fears, render his book 'philosophically unimportant' he hopes that 'the eccentricity may please in frivolous circles.'

Stevenson could be militant. His letter on Father Damien shows that. But there was nothing of the professional reformer about him. He had no hobby, and he was the artist first and then the philanthropist. This is right; it was the law of his being. Other men are better equipped to do the work of humanity's city missionaries than was he. Let their more rugged health and less sensitive nerves bear the burden; his poet's mission was not the less important.

The remaining point I have to note, among a number which might be noted, is his firm grasp of this idea: that whether he is his brother's keeper or not he is at all events his brother's brother. It is 'philosophy' of a very good sort to have mastered this conception and to have made the life square with the theory. This doctrine is fashionable just now, and thick books have been written on the subject, filled with wise terms and arguments. I don't know whether Stevenson bothered his head with these matters from a scientific point of view or not, but there are many illustrations of his interest. Was it this that made him so

gentle in his unaffected manly way? He certainly understood how difficult it is for the well-to-do member of society to get any idea not wholly distorted of the feelings and motives of the lower classes. He believed that certain virtues resided more conspicuously among the poor than among the rich. He declared that the poor were more charitably disposed than their superiors in wealth. 'A workman or a peddler cannot shutter himself off from his less comfortable neighbors. If he treats himself to a luxury he must do it in the face of a dozen who cannot. And what should more directly lead to charitable thoughts?' But with the advent of prosperity a man becomes incapable of understanding how the less fortunate live. Stevenson likens that happy individual to a man going up in a balloon. 'He presently passes through a zone of clouds and after that merely earthly things are hidden from his gaze. He sees nothing but the heavenly bodies, all in admirable order and positively as good as new. He finds himself surrounded in the most touching manner by the attentions of Providence, and compares himself involuntarily with the lilies and the sky-larks. He does not precisely sing, of course; but then he looks so unassuming in his open landau! If all the world dined at one table this philosophy would meet with some rude knocks.'

In the three years since Stevenson's death

many additions have been made to the body of literature by him and about him. There are letters, finished and unfinished novels, and recollections by the heaping handful. Critics are considerably exercised over the question whether any, or all, or only two or three of his books are to last. The matter has, I believe, been definitely decided so that posterity, whatever other responsibilities it has, will at least not have that one; and anything that we can do to relieve the future of its burdens is altruism worthy the name.

Stevenson was one of the best tempered men that ever lived. He never prated about goodness, but was unaffectedly good and sunny-hearted as long as he lived. Of how many men can it be said, as it *can* be said of him, that he was sick all his days and never uttered a whimper? What rare health of mind was this which went with such poor health of body! I 've known men to complain more over toothache than Stevenson thought it worth while to do with death staring him in the face. He did not, like Will o' the Mill, live until the snow began to thicken on his head. He never knew that which we call middle age.

He worked harder than a man in his condition should have done. At times he felt the need to write for money; and this was hostile to his theory of literature. He wrote to his friend Colvin: 'I sometimes sit and yearn for

anything in the nature of an income that would come in — mine has all got to be gone and fished for with the immortal mind of man. What I want is an income that really comes in of itself while all you have to do is just to blossom and exist and sit on chairs.'

I wish he might have had it; I can think of no other man whose indolence would have been so profitable to the world.

STEVENSON'S ST. IVES

With the publication of *St. Ives* the catalogue of Stevenson's important writings has closed. In truth it closed several years ago, — in 1891, to be exact, — when *Catriona* was published. Nothing which has appeared since that date can modify to any great extent the best critical estimate of his novels. Neither *Weir of Hermiston* nor *St. Ives* affects the matter. You may throw them into the scales with his other works, and then you may take them out; beyond a mere trembling the balance is not disturbed. But suppose you were to take out *Kidnapped*, or *Treasure Island*, or *The Master of Ballantrae*, the loss would be felt at once and seriously. And unless he has left behind him, hidden away among his loose papers, some rare and perfect sketch, some letter to posterity which shall be to his reputation what Neil Paraday's lost novel in *The Death of the Lion* might have been to *his*, *St. Ives* may be regarded as the epilogue.

Stevenson's death and the publication of this last effort of his fine genius may tend to draw

away a measure of public interest from that type of novel which he, his imitators, and his rivals have so abundantly produced. This may be the close of a 'period' such as we read about in histories of literature.

If the truth be told, has not our generation had enough of duels, hair-breadth escapes, post-chaises, and highwaymen, mysterious strangers muffled in great-coats, and pistols which always miss fire when they should n't? To say positively that we *have* done with all this might appear extravagant in the light of the popularity of certain modern heroic novels. But it might not be too radical a view if one were to maintain that these books are the expression of something temporary and accidental, that they sustain a chronological relation to modern literature rather than an essential one.

Matthew Arnold spoke of Heine as a sardonic smile on the face of the Zeitgeist. Let us say that these modern stories in the heroic vein are a mere heightening of color on the cheeks of that interesting young lady, the Genius of the modern novel — a heightening of color *on* the cheeks, for the color comes from without and not from within. It is a matter of no moment. Artificial red does no harm for once, and looks well under gaslight.

These novels of adventure which we buy so cheerfully, read with such pleasure, and make such a good-natured fuss over, are for the

greater part an expression of something altogether foreign to the deeper spirit of modern fiction. Surely the true modern novel is the one which reflects the life of to-day. And life to-day is easy, familiar, rich in material comforts, and on the whole without painfully striking contrasts and thrilling episodes. People have enough to eat, reasonable liberty, and a degree of patience with one another which suggests indifference. A man may shout aloud in the market-place the most revolutionary opinions, and hardly be taken to task for it; and then on the other hand we have got our rulers pretty well under control. This paragraph, however, is not the peroration of a eulogy upon 'our unrivaled happiness.' It attempts merely to lay stress on such facts as these, that it is not now possible to hang a clergyman of the Church of England for forgery, as was done in 1777; that a man may not be deprived of the custody of his own children because he holds heterodox religious opinions, as happened in 1816. There is widespread toleration; and civilization in the sense in which Ruskin uses the word has much increased. Now it is possible for a Jew to become Prime Minister, and for a Roman Catholic to become England's Poet Laureate.

If, then, life is familiar, comfortable, unrestrained, and easy, as it certainly seems to be, how are we to account for the rise of this

semihistoric, heroic literature? It is almost grotesque, the contrast between the books themselves and the manner in which they are produced. One may picture the incongruous elements of the situation, — a young society man going up to his suite in a handsome modern apartment house, and dictating romance to a type-writer. In the evening he dines at his club, and the day after the happy launching of his novel he is interviewed by the representative of a newspaper syndicate, to whom he explains his literary method, while the interviewer makes a note of his dress and a comment on the decoration of his mantelpiece.

Surely romance written in this way — and we have not grossly exaggerated the way — bears no relation to modern literature other than a chronological one. *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *A Gentleman of France*, to mention two happy and pleasing examples of this type of novel, are not modern in the sense that they express any deep feeling or any vital characteristic of to-day. They are not instinct with the spirit of the times. One might say that these stories represent the novel in its theatrical mood. It is the novel masquerading. Just as a respectable bookkeeper likes to go into private theatricals, wear a wig with curls, a slouch hat with ostrich feathers, a sword and ruffles, and play a part to tear a cat in, so does the novel like to do the same. The day after

the performance the whole artificial equipment drops away and disappears. The bookkeeper becomes a bookkeeper once more and a natural man. The hour before the footlights has done him no harm. True, he forgot his lines at one place, but what is a prompter for if not to act in such an emergency? Now that it is over the affair may be pronounced a success, — particularly in the light of the gratifying statement that a clear profit has been realized towards paying for the new organ.

This is a not unfair comparison of the part played by these books in modern fiction. The public likes them, buys them, reads them; and there is no reason why the public should not. In proportion to the demand for color, action, posturing, and excessive gesticulation, these books have a financial success; in proportion to the conscientiousness of the artist who creates them they have a literary vitality. But they bear to the actual modern novel a relation not unlike that which *The Castle of Otranto* bears to *Tom Jones*, — making allowance of course for the chronological discrepancy.

From one point the heroic novel is a protest against the commonplace and stupid elements of modern life. According to Mr. Frederic Harrison there is no romance left in us. Life is stale and flat; yet even Mr. Harrison would hardly go to the length of declaring that it is also commercially unprofitable. The artificial

apartment-house romance is one expression of the revolt against the duller elements in our civilization ; and as has often been pointed out, the novel of psychological horrors is another expression.

There are a few men, however, whose work is not accounted for by saying that they love theatrical pomp and glitter for its own sake, or that they write fiction as a protest against the times in which they live. Stevenson was of this number. He was an adventurer by inheritance and by practice. He came of a race of adventurers, adventurers who built lighthouses and fought with that bold outlaw, the Sea. He himself honestly loved, and in a measure lived, a wild life. There is no truer touch of nature than in the scene where St. Ives tells the boy Rowley that he is a hunted fugitive with a price set upon his head, and then enjoys the tragic astonishment depicted in the lad's face.

Rowley 'had a high sense of romance and a secret cultus for all soldiers and criminals. His traveling library consisted of a chap-book life of Wallace, and some sixpenny parts of the Old Bailey Sessions Papers ; . . . and the choice depicts his character to a hair. You can imagine how his new prospects brightened on a boy of this disposition. To be the servant and companion of a fugitive, a soldier, and a murderer rolled in one — to live by stratagems, disguises, and false names, in an atmosphere of

midnight and mystery so thick that you could cut it with a knife — was really, I believe, more dear to him than his meals, though he was a great trencher-man and something of a glutton besides. For myself, as the peg by which all this romantic business hung, I was simply idolized from that moment; and he would rather have sacrificed his hand than surrendered the privilege of serving me.'

One can believe that Stevenson was a boy with tastes and ambitions like Rowley. But for that matter Rowley stands for universal boy-nature.

Criticism of *St. Ives* becomes both easy and difficult by reason of the fact that we know so much about the book from the author's point of view. He wrote it in trying circumstances, and never completed it; the last six chapters are from the pen of a practiced story-teller, who follows the author's known scheme of events. Stevenson was almost too severe in his comment upon his book. He says of *St. Ives*: —

'It is a mere tissue of adventures; the central figure not very well or very sharply drawn; no philosophy, no destiny, to it; some of the happenings very good in themselves, I believe, but none of them *bildende*, none of them constructive, except in so far perhaps as they make up a kind of sham picture of the time, all in italics, and all out of drawing. Here and there, I think, it is well written; and here and there

it 's not. . . . If it has a merit to it, I should say it was a sort of deliberation and swing to the style, which seems to me to suit the mail-coaches and post-chaises with which it sounds all through. 'T is my most prosaic book.'

One must remember that this is epistolary self-criticism, and that it is hardly to be looked upon in the nature of an 'advance notice.' Still more confidential and epistolary is the humorous and reckless affirmation that *St. Ives* is 'a rudderless hulk.' 'It 's a pagoda,' says Stevenson in a letter dated September, 1894, 'and you can just feel — or I can feel — that it might have been a pleasant story if it had only been blessed at baptism.'

He had to rewrite portions of it in consequence of having received what Dr. Johnson would have called 'a large accession of new ideas.' The ideas were historical. The first five chapters describe the experiences of French prisoners of war in Edinburgh Castle. St. Ives was the only 'gentleman' among them, the only man with ancestors and a right to the 'particle.' He suffered less from ill treatment than from the sense of being made ridiculous. The prisoners were dressed in uniform, — 'jacket, waistcoat, and trousers of a sulphur or mustard yellow, and a shirt of blue-and-white striped cotton.' St. Ives thought that 'some malignant genius had found his masterpiece of irony in that dress.' So much is made of this

point that one reads with unusual interest the letter in which Stevenson bewails his 'miserable luck' with *St. Ives;* for he was halfway through it when a book, which he had ordered six months before, arrived, upsetting all his previous notions of how the prisoners were cared for. Now he must change the thing from top to bottom. 'How could I have dreamed the French prisoners were watched over like a female charity school, kept in a grotesque livery, and shaved twice a week?' All his points had been made on the idea that they were 'unshaved and clothed anyhow.' He welcomes the new matter, however, in spite of the labor it entails. And it is easy to see how he has enriched the earlier chapters by accentuating St. Ives's disgust and mortification over his hideous dress and stubby chin.

The book has a light-hearted note, as a romance of the road should have. The events take place in 1813; they might have occurred fifty or seventy-five years earlier. For the book lacks that convincing something which fastens a story immovably within certain chronological limits. It is the effect which Thomas Hardy has so wonderfully produced in that little tale describing Napoleon's night-time visit to the coast of England; the effect which Stevenson himself was equally happy in making when he wrote the piece called *A Lodging for a Night.*

St. Ives has plenty of good romantic stuff in it, though on the whole it is romance of the conventional sort. It is too well bred, let us say too observant of the forms and customs which one has learned to expect in a novel of the road. There is an escape from the castle in the sixth chapter, a flight in the darkness towards the cottage of the lady-love in the seventh chapter, an appeal to the generosity of the lady-love's aunt, a dragon with gold-rimmed eyeglasses, in the ninth chapter. And so on. We would not imply that all this is lacking in distinction, but it seems to want that high distinction which Stevenson could give to his work. Ought one to look for it in a book confessedly unsatisfactory to its author, and a book which was left incomplete?

There is a pretty account of the first meeting between St. Ives and Flora. One naturally compares it with the scene in which David Balfour describes his sensations and emotions when the spell of Catriona's beauty came upon him. Says David: —

'There is no greater wonder than the way the face of a young woman fits in a man's mind and stays there, and he could never tell you why; it just seems it was the thing he wanted.'

This is quite perfect, and in admirable keeping with the genuine simplicity of David's character: —

'She had wonderful bright eyes like stars; . . . and whatever was the cause, I stood there staring like a fool.'

This is more concise than St. Ives's description of Flora; but St. Ives was a man of the world who had read books, and knew how to compare the young Scotch beauty to Diana: —

'As I saw her standing, her lips parted, a divine trouble in her eyes, I could have clapped my hands in applause, and was ready to acclaim her a genuine daughter of the winds.'

The account of the meeting with Walter Scott and his daughter on the moors does not have the touch of reality in it that one would like. Here was an opportunity, however, of the author's own making.

There are flashes of humor, as when St. Ives found himself locked in the poultry-house 'alone with half a dozen sitting hens. In the twilight of the place all fixed their eyes on me severely, and seemed to upbraid me with some crying impropriety.'

There are sentences in which, after Stevenson's own manner, real insight is combined with felicitous expression. St. Ives is commenting upon the fact that he has done a thing which most men learned in the wisdom of this world would have pronounced absurd; he has 'made a confidant of a boy in his teens and positively smelling of the nursery.' But he has no cause to repent it. 'There is none so apt

as a boy to be the adviser of any man in difficulties like mine. To the beginnings of virile common sense he adds the last lights of the child's imagination.'

Men have been known to thank God when certain authors died, — not because they bore the slightest personal ill-will, but because they knew that as long as the authors lived nothing could prevent them from writing. In thinking of Stevenson, however, one cannot tell whether he experiences the more a feeling of personal or of literary loss, whether he laments chiefly the man or the author. It is not possible to separate the various cords of love, admiration, and gratitude which bind us to this man. He had a multitude of friends. He appealed to a wider audience than he knew. He himself said that he was read by journalists, by his fellow novelists, and by boys. Envious admiration might prompt a less successful writer to exclaim, 'Well, is n't that enough?' No, for to be truly blest one must have women among one's readers. And there are elect ladies not a few who know Stevenson's novels; yet it is a question whether he has reached the great mass of female novel-readers. Certainly he is not well known in that circle of fashionable maidens and young matrons which justly prides itself upon an acquaintance with Van Bibber. And we can hardly think he is a familiar name to that vast and not fashionable constituency

which battens upon the romances of Marie Corelli under the impression that it is perusing literature, while he offers no comfort whatever to that type of reader who prefers that a novel shall be filled with hard thinking, with social riddles, theological problems, and 'sexual theorems.' Stevenson was happy with his journalists and boys. Among all modern British men of letters he was in many ways the most highly blest; and his career was entirely picturesque and interesting. Other men have been more talked about, but the one thing which he did not lack was discriminating praise from those who sit in high critical places.

He was prosperous, too, though not grossly prosperous. It is no new fact that the sales of his books were small in proportion to the magnitude of his contemporary fame. People praised him tremendously, but paid their dollars for entertainment of another quality than that supplied by his fine gifts. *An Inland Voyage* has never been as popular as *Three Men in a Boat*, nor *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* as *King Solomon's Mines;* while *The Black Arrow*, which Mr. Lang does not like, and Professor Saintsbury insists is 'a wonderfully good story,' has not met a wide public favor at all. *Travels with a Donkey*, which came out in 1879, had only reached its sixth English edition in 1887. Perhaps that is good for a book so entirely virtuous in a literary way, but it was not a success to keep a man awake nights.

We have been told that it is wrong to admire *Jekyll and Hyde*, that the story is 'coarse,' an 'outrage upon the grand allegories of the same motive,' and several other things; nay, it is even hinted that this popular tale is evidence of a morbid strain in the author's nature. Rather than dispute the point it is a temptation to urge upon the critic that he is not radical enough, for in Stevenson's opinion all literature might be only a 'morbid secretion.'

The critics, however, agree in allowing us to admire without stint those smaller works in which his characteristic gifts displayed themselves at the best. *Thrawn Janet* is one of these, and the story of Tod Lapraik, told by Andie Dale in *Catriona*, is another. Stevenson himself declared that if he had never written anything except these two stories he would still have been a writer. We hope that there would be votes cast for *Will o' the Mill*, which is a lovely bit of literary workmanship. And there are a dozen besides these.

He was an artist of undoubted gifts, but he was an artist in small literary forms. His longest good novels are after all little books. When he attempted a large canvas he seemed not perfectly in command of his materials, though he could use those materials as they could have been used by no other artist. There is nothing in his books akin to that broad and massive treatment which may be felt in a novel

like *Rhoda Fleming* or in a tragedy like *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

Andrew Lang was right when he said of Stevenson: He is a 'Little Master,' but of the Little Masters the most perfect and delightful.

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